

Joseph's Son

Intro. Jacksonville is my hometown and instead of being known as Fr. Mike, to some people I was “*Sally’s son.*” She was not known as “*Mike’s mom.*” Every once in a while I was asked if I wanted to be pastor of Christ the King, my home parish. My response was *not until no one who knew me as a kid is still living there!* I think Mrs. Duncan is still living. Parents have a difficult time seeing their grown children as anything but the little boy or girl. It must be an occupational hazard. I beg you parents: work hard to see your children as capable people for their age.

I. According to Luke’s gospel, after the Lord left home he went to the desert, then to the Jordan River to join John the Baptizer. The Lord returned to the area of Galilee. He spent enough time in the

synagogues of the area surrounding Capernaum to become known for his teaching. There he was accepted for who he was – a man with knowledge of scripture and Jewish tradition. Then he went home to share the great news of salvation. Thomas Wolfe wrote a book called *You Can’t Go Home Again*, in which a man found it difficult to return to his hometown after he became famous. [Thanks, Fr. Leonard Fick] Almost two thousand years earlier, the Lord found that out. He was warmly welcomed and invited to read the scripture. After he gave an interpretation of the prophet Isaiah saying it referred to himself, the warmth evaporated like it did last week in Minnesota. The welcome mat was jerked out from under him. All it took was for one or two people to say he was just “Joseph’s son;” nobody important, with nothing important to say. Especially

when he mentioned that God's blessings and miracles were not only for the Israelites. The neighbors previously so generous in their praise were now ready to kill him. But it was not his hour to die and he moved on. I don't think scripture mentions the Lord *ever* returning to his hometown.

Concl. It is amazing how quickly the people of Nazareth turned on the Lord. They were full of praise for him as long as he was doing and saying things they liked and agreed with. As long as they could keep him as "Joseph's son," it didn't upset their lives. But he was *God's Son*. They became enraged when Jesus reminded them that God's blessings and miracles were not limited to them, but also for the Gentiles and *all people*. It is amazing how some people *we* think are friends turn on us if they disagree with us or don't like what we do or

wear or are friends with. That can happen as quickly as it did to the Lord. That's one side of the behavior. The other side is how do *we* respond when others resist *our* judgments of *them*? We too attempt to put people in boxes: they're from the south or the north; from the country or the city; one party or the other. We might work on that this week with at least one of the people we have recently shut down. **We can do a lot of things, but we can never stop being God's daughters and sons. That's who *we* all are.**

Fr. Michael Pendergraft

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