

Young Adult Reflection

January 31

Greetings from St. Francis:

I hope the cold winter weather is not too dampening on your spirits. Soon spring will be here.
Fr. Jim McDougall

+ A reading from the holy gospel according to Luke

Jesus began speaking in the synagogue: "Today this Scripture passage is fulfilled in your hearing." All who were present spoke favorably of him; they marveled at the appealing discourse which came from his lips. They also asked, "Is not this Joseph's son?" He said to them, "You will doubtless quote me the proverb, 'Physician, heal yourself,' and say, 'Do here in your own country the things we have heard you have done in Capernaum.' But in fact," he went on, "no prophet gains acceptance in his native place. Indeed, let me remind you, there were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah when the heavens remained closed for three and a half years and a great famine spread over the land. It was to none of these that Elijah was sent, but to a widow of Zarephath near Sidon. Recall, too, the many lepers in Israel in the time of Elisha the prophet; yet not one was cured except Naaman the Syrian." At these words the whole audience in the synagogue was filled with indignation. They rose up and expelled him from the town, leading him to the brow of the hill on which it was built, and intending to hurl him over the edge. But he went straight through their midst and walked away. The gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTION: His six-year old son had been invited to a number of birthday ice-skating parties where he was the only one who couldn't skate. His dad couldn't skate either, so the boy had to depend on other parents to pull and push him around the ice. His athletically-challenged father feared that he had passed down to his son the DNA for blinking when the ball was thrown toward the bat, for hanging back at pickup basketball games, for falling down on the ice. At least his son was spared from the taunts he had endured when he was six.

So Dad decided to get his son ice-skating lessons. The boy agreed to the Saturday morning lessons stoically if not enthusiastically. The first lessons did not go well; the boy struggled to make some progress, but there was little pleasure or sense of fun. So Dad asked if it would help if he took lessons, too. "That would be great, Dad!"

After some procrastinating, Dad finally managed to put aside his own fear of breaking his neck and embarrassing himself in front of an ice-rink full of children. He laced up a pair of skates and joined his son on the ice. At first, it was all he could do to keep himself from falling, but within a few weeks he was making his way around the rink. He didn't look particularly smooth and he could feel the heat rise in his face with every turn toward the bleachers, but he managed to stay on his feet and he didn't humiliate himself.

Both father and son kept at it. Soon his son was actually smiling – he loved that he was further along than his dad. The six-year old was never going to be Bobby Orr, but that was OK. He was able to hold his own and no longer hung back when kids invited him to skate or play.

God comes to us in all kinds of "prophets" who call forth from us compassion, generosity, consolation, and peace. God raises up parents and teachers, preachers and ministers, to help us realize our own call to be prophets of God's love and forgiveness, to embrace God's grace enabling us to transform our own Nazareths into God's dwelling places. More often than not, the "prophets" we do not accept are ourselves; we are too fearful, too intimidated, too self-absorbed to realize the responsibility of our baptisms to be teachers, reconcilers and healers in God's compassion. In the spirit of Jesus, let us put aside our fear of falling down on the ice and be willing to risk ridicule and embarrassment to help one another stand tall in the light of God's love.