

**4th Sunday in
Ordinary Time
February 2-3, 2019**

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Living Catholic in the 808: The Challenge to Accept Christ

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Last Sunday, we heard in the gospel Jesus speak a consoling word; liberty to captives, good news to the poor, recovery of sight for those who are blind. As today's gospel indicates, this encouraging word was, at first, well received by the synagogue assembly. But, as they ask how "Joseph's son" could have spoken so eloquently, they betray their doubts about Jesus and their unwillingness to really follow him. As Jesus continues with a word that challenges them, they show their "true colors". They are ready to kill him.

Today's gospel challenges us to accept the prophetic words that Christ and the Church speak to us. It is not easy to hear the truth, especially when it calls into question our behaviors and attitudes. It is difficult, especially in a society, that often accepts behaviors and attitudes that are contrary to what Christ teaches. What is our response to Christ and to those who speak prophetically? Will we accept Christ only if he says what we want to hear? Will we accept him even when he says what we don't want to hear but need to hear?

The first reading challenges us to be prophetic. It is not easy to speak the truth, especially when we are opposed. It is especially difficult in a society that, in the name of tolerance, looks down on those who speak against behaviors and attitudes contrary to what Christ teaches. It is difficult to be honest with family and friends who may be misguided in their beliefs. What is our response to the call to be prophetic?

The key to accepting the prophetic word and speaking it is found in the second reading. It is love, after the description that Paul gives us and that Jesus proclaimed. To accept the challenge of the gospel, we must know that God loves us and his correction and teaching is done out of love. To challenge one another effectively, we must do it in love. This is because it is not only the truth that is important. How it is served up is significant. If it is served up in love it has the power to transform us and others.