

## **Pastoral Reflection: 4th Sunday of Ordinary Time/ Luke 4,21-30**

### **Expectations**

Religion has many functions for our society. Some equate religious life with private life. For these people, faith has a psychological dimension, a spiritual balm that soothes the stress and strains of daily life. Or, Church acts as a private club, a Sunday meeting place for friends.

Others see religion as a moral barometer, a social conscience. Religious leaders should point the way to a better life, a higher example.

Religious people should help the needy and the oppressed. In this way, they can help to build a better society.

These, and many other reasons, are good, solid reasons that argue for religious life and the existence of the Church. But they don't get to the root reason for religion and religious groups. The ultimate reason for religion is faith, a relationship with God. The Church is to foster that faith. Jesus came to Nazareth for that purpose. But the expectations of the people lie elsewhere.

Expectations can be caused by frustration. We want something to happen. So we look to others for fulfillment. Faith can become confused. And prayer can dry up.

Expectations are always hard to fulfill. But, faith is not based upon expectations, but on a relationship with God. We must recognize the difference between the two. And place our expectations before God. (Not the other way around!)