

## Homily for 14<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time

When asked about the possible talents of Ludwig Van Beethoven, his teacher of many years called him “hopeless” as a composer. An expert once commented that Vince Lombardi possessed minimal football knowledge and lacked motivation. Thomas Edison’s teachers advised his parents to keep him home because he was “too stupid to learn anything.” A newspaper editor who complained that he lacked creativity fired Walt Disney. And after Fred Astaire shot his first screen test, the testing director said: “Can’t act! Slightly bald! Can dance just a little!” Many years later the world-famous Mikhail Baryshnikov would describe Fred Astaire as the most significant dancer in the last century.

What concerns me is not how poorly these obviously talented and gifted individuals were judged. No, what concerns me is how many people who might have so much to offer never blossomed because of the negative judgment that people impose on them. And a question that is even more interesting is how many individuals have I misjudged and imposed a negative judgment because I felt they had little or nothing to offer.

And I don’t think that I’m alone in judging others. I think that all of us might be guilty of a judgmental attitude. How many of us allow

an experience of someone in the past to determine how we see him or her in the present? Just think of going to a high school reunion. How many of us impose on the people whom we meet at these reunions the same opinion we had of them when we knew them way back when?

Well, this judgment that the experts rendered on people like Beethoven and Edison and which we tend to render on each other is the same judgment that Ezekiel, Paul and Jesus experience in today's readings.

Ezekiel is rejected when empowered by the Spirit to speak the Word of God. Paul reminds us in the second reading of the great mystery of our faith that the power and grace of God often is found in its richness in weakness, distress and failure...in the people we might all too quickly be willing to "throw away." And Jesus is rejected because he does not fit into the stereotypical mold of the "boy next door who also was the son of the carpenter." As a result of their shortsightedness, Jesus "could work no miracle" among them.

It is sad that so many times we prevent individuals from being who they could be because we make them victims of judgments that we have no right to make.

The Word of God would challenge us to look at God, the world and one another with eyes that are more insightful and hearts that are more receptive.