

B - Fourteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time - July 4, 2021
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As I listen to today's readings ... I can not help wondering ... if there ... are any prophets ... **here** ... among us today. Now, I'm sure many of you ... when you hear the term prophet ... might think of ... one who predicts ... or **claims** to predict ... the future ... such as the oft-touted 16th century **astrologist** ... Nostradamus.

But in the scriptural sense ... this is not at **all** what is meant by the term prophet. No ... a **prophet** ... is one who is called by God to convey a **message** to God's people.

It might be a message of hope preaching God's kingdom and ... the promise of salvation or ... a message proclaiming the promise of a "new covenant" offering **hope** in a "Messiah".

The Lord tells Ezekiel "... I am sending you to the Israelites ... who have rebelled against me ..." so ... the message might also be one of **admonition** ... focusing on **infidelity** or false worship ... or a misplaced **reliance** on worldly things ... or perhaps ... the exploitation of the **poor** ... so the prophet might preach **repentance**. Finally ... the message might be more subtle ... revealed by the way the prophet conducts his ... or her ... own life ... as a living demonstration ... of faith ... hope ... and love.

But whether by words or deeds, God's message is delivered by His Old Testament prophets ... like Ezekiel ... sometimes criticizing ... sometimes **energizing** the people. In either case ... the prophets were sent to the people to help them ... **realign** themselves ... with God.

As Christians **we** get to look at the messages of the Old Testament Prophets with 20/20 hind-sight. So ... we can see that God's promise is made clear ... **only** in Jesus Christ. We believe Jesus' life, ministry, and paschal mystery not only **are** prophetic ... but are also the **fulfillment** of all those Old Testament prophecies ... the absolute **fullness** of God's revelation. This is why He is called "Christ" ... "the anointed One of God" ... anointed by the Holy Spirit ... Priest, **Prophet**, and King. He not only speaks and teaches God's word ... he **is** that Word.

Now ... **no** prophet ever mentioned in the Bible had it easy. The prophet's message was hardly **ever** ... well received. The Lord warns Ezekiel of this in advance: "... obstinate of heart are they to whom I am sending you." Even **Jesus** was not immune to this. The rejection of Jesus in his hometown, just like the prophets of old, demonstrates once more ... the prophet's message will **never** be popular. Paul, too, speaks of "insults, hardships, persecutions and constraints" ... just like **every** prophet of before him. Yet the Lord reassures Paul: "My grace is sufficient for you ...". The prophet has the courage of **authority** ... because he pronounces not his **own** words ... but **God's** words.

No ... the prophetic life will **never** be easy. It was not easy for those prophets who endured persecution in the early church ... or for those prophets we celebrate **today** ... founding a nation ... "with a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence ...". It was not easy for a young Karol Wo-ti'-ya ... as he helped Jewish refugees escape from the Nazis ... long **before** becoming priest or pope ... or for Dr. Martin Luther King ... **murdered** for preaching justice and equality.

And if we are true to our **own** prophetic call ... we can expect that we too will experience ridicule and rejection. But prophets are **so** needed in our world today and ... it's **still** not easy. We **are** called to **be** prophets ... to live as God wants us to live. We are called to be faithful to **our** baptismal vocation just as **Jesus** was faithful ... always extending love ... **never** expecting popular acceptance. For some like

St. Oscar Romero ... a prophetic call leads to martyrdom. For some, prophecy might mean social activism on behalf of those who cannot speak for themselves. But for most of us, the call to be a prophet means leading lives of faith ... hope ... and love ... simply witnessing in our everyday lives ... **God's** love. So ... are there any prophets ... here among us today? ... I certainly **hope** so.