



14th SUNDAY in ORDINARY TIME ***YEAR B – July 8, 2018***

As I read the scripture passages for the 14th Sunday in Ordinary Time, the focus of attention is clearly on the role of a prophet in the history of salvation. Some people think a prophet is someone who foretells the future, but that is not the way the word is used in the bible. The word comes from two Greek words - pro which means "for" and phemi, which means "to speak" - and it literally means someone who is chosen by God to speak on behalf of God. It can include the future, but it doesn't have to.

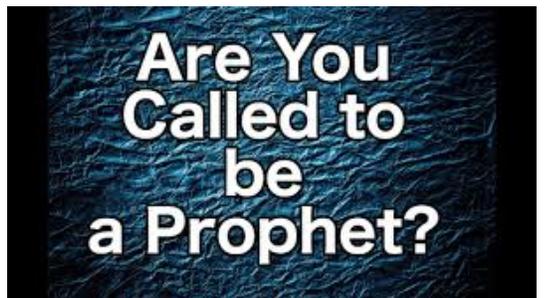
In the first reading (Ez 2:2-5), Ezekiel is sent to the chosen people because they had turned away from God. He was afraid at first to accept the challenge, but he trusted our Lord and he fulfilled his mission. He was not popular – with many people who didn't want to hear the truth.

In the second reading (2 Corinthians 12: 7-10), St. Paul is conscious of his own shortcomings and begs God to remove the thorn in his flesh so that he can better speak on behalf of God. But God had other designs. St. Paul trusted God and fulfilled his mission to the Gentiles. Despite his flaws and shortcomings - and there were many – he fulfilled his mission.

In the Gospel today (Mark 6:1-6), Jesus reminds us that it is not easy to be a prophet. He tells us that a prophet is without honor in his native place. Have you ever thought of yourself as a prophet? Have you ever thought of yourself as someone who speaks on behalf of God? Recall the first four spiritual works of mercy. All of us, as baptized Catholics are commissioned to: Admonish the sinner, Instruct the ignorant, Counsel the doubtful and Comfort the sorrowful.

Every time we do that, we are fulfilling our role as a prophet in the biblical sense of that word. We are speaking on behalf of God. It doesn't mean nagging others - that doesn't work. It simply turns people off. It doesn't mean being judgmental. By the way, the word “judgmental” in the bible means condemning others. Judging between right and wrong is something we all must do. But condemning others to hell or anywhere else is not our job. Speaking on behalf of God means saying what Jesus would say and saying it the way He would say it.

For a few moments in silence, reflect on your call to be a prophet. Who needs you to speak to them on behalf of God? Is it a child, a parent, a brother or sister, a friend, a co-worker, a neighbor? Perhaps God is calling you to admonish someone, or to instruct a child, or to counsel a teenager, or to comfort an older person. Don't worry about what you will say. Trust our lord and you will do just fine. Never be a prophet of gloom and doom. Recall the words of Billy Graham:



“I've read the last page of the Bible. It's going to turn out all right.”