

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

July 3-4, 2021

Readings: Ezekiel 2:2-5; 2 Corinthians 12:7-10; Mark 6: 1-6a

Preacher: Phyllis Tierney, SSJ

Today's readings are all about being a prophet. Our anointing at Baptism calls us to be "priests, prophets, and kings." That all sounds special but wait a minute! Ezekiel, St. Paul, and even Jesus weren't having a great time of it! In our first reading, Ezekiel is being sent by God to speak to the Israelites. God calls them rebels, "hard of face and obstinate of heart..." St. Paul has to contend with a thorn in the flesh and "an Angel of Satan to beat me." Paul begs for relief three times and is told "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness."

Jesus meets obstacles in his own preaching when he goes to his hometown. He finds himself mocked in the synagogue as the carpenter, Mary's son, and his brothers and sisters are known to everyone. It causes Jesus to say, "a prophet is not without honor except in his own native place and among his own kin and his own house."

So where does that leave us—who were given this prophetic role at our Baptism? Being a prophet requires courage! Prophets must be willing to suffer for the sake of God's message that the Holy Spirit calls on us to deliver. The message often falls on the deaf ears of the persons who are called to receive it.

As I ruminated on these passages it occurred to me that our lives today are not so different from Biblical times. We live in a time of deep division among nations, among political and religious and societal groups. We experience division in our own families and communities.

The Covid-19 pandemic has isolated people around the world from one perspective. The availability of vaccines and the decision to be vaccinated or not has caused other divisions including those of one's own family, to use but one example.

We have greater access to the world through technology and yet have become more isolated through our political and religious ideologies. We experience a lack of trust in the other. This is an age of individualism versus communities of support.

Where do we see prophets? I find myself thinking of Greta Thunberg, the young Swedish teenager who has challenged world leaders regarding mitigation of climate change. I admire Malala Yousafzai, the young Pakistani woman who had the courage to speak up for the education of young girls in her native country and was shot as she rode home on a school bus.

The murder of George Floyd and the many African Americans who have lost their lives to police brutality have given a prophetic message that the lives of Black and Brown People matter; the lives of LGBTQ people matter. The lives of all people matter!!

Pope Francis has spoken with a prophetic voice in his encyclical *Laudato Si* as he urges us to remember that all of creation is connected, and we are God's stewards who must preserve and protect the earth. He speaks forcefully in *Fratelli Tutti* of the importance of friendship, of working together to heal the world's brokenness. Like all prophets, his words are seldom heard from the pulpits of our Church!

So, what about us? St. Francis of Assisi urged his followers to preach always but use words only when necessary!

Our witness is in the fidelity to the life and vocation to which God has called each of us. Yet the Holy Spirit sometimes calls on us to speak. Are we prepared to speak up when a particular individual or group is denigrated? Do we hold our tongue because we do not want to make waves and cause upheaval in our families or social circles? There is a time to be silent and a time to speak! We pray for courage to respond when silence is complicit to the evil at hand. The

prophet speaks at his or her own peril but if the message is of God, it must be spoken. And the one who is converted may be oneself!