

14th Sunday in Ordinary Time (B) July 8, 2012
“No one is a prophet in his home town”

Introduction: Ever meet a prophet? Doesn't have to be a guy in a long robe with a beard.

1) Gospel

1. Can have “home-grown prophets. This was what Jesus was, in his home town of Nazareth.”
2. At first, fellow townspeople astounded at his teaching, wisdom, deeds of power.
3. Then begin raising questions: “he’s only the carpenter, the son of Mary: we know him and his relatives.
We’ve known him all his life and what he does, - he’s no better than the rest of us.
What’s he making himself out to be? Who does he think he is?”
4. Like the people of Nazareth, we tend to put people into slots, we have them sized up. If they go beyond the limits we’ve given them, do something impressive beyond what we figure they are capable of, we find it hard to accept. Maybe we’re even jealous.
5. Jesus said: “Prophets are not without honour, except in their home town, among their own kin, and in their own house.”
6. Jesus is amazed at their lack of faith in him. Jesus felt rejected by people he knew so well and loved.

2) Prophets Today

1. In the Bible, prophets do not so much foretell the future but rather proclaim the message of God to the people, pointing out their sinfulness, their turning away from God, not being faithful to their Covenant.
The prophet calls them to return to God and act like God with their fellow members.
2. God has prophets speaking to us today. Our popes are prophets for us, and people like Jean Vanier or General Romeo Dallaire, who point out what’s wrong in society, and call for adherence to God’s truth and love by the human family.
3. We can have prophets in our own community who point out injustices, who object to the way governments treat the poor, or immigrants or refugees, or who call out for affordable housing, or who warn us not to be led astray by our materialistic, consumer, pleasure seeking culture.

3) The Popes and Social Teaching

1. We have a situation in our Church where the prophetic voice of our Popes has been largely ignored.
2. The Popes have spoken to us of our need to know Catholic Social Teaching and act upon it.
3. The Social Teaching of the Church tells us how we should be working together in society for the common good, to make the conditions of society better, so the poor and needy and weak are able to have a sufficient income for a proper standard of living, where, instead of a fierce competition for wealth and power and possessions, there is a cooperative attitude to help those who do not share adequately in the wealth of our country.
4. The common good means making the conditions of society such that they contribute to the development and fulfillment of each member of society, neglecting none.
5. This is the role of government but all of us have a responsibility to work for this. The measure of a good society and a good government is how they care for the poor and weakest members of society.

6. The Popes tell us that the goods of the earth have been given to us by God to be shared among all of us. The right to a portion of the earth's goods sufficient for the needs of oneself and one's family belongs to everyone. This is due to the dignity of each human person, created in the image of God.

4) What Can We Do?

1. First of all, all of us have an obligation to work for social justice, for the common good. The official Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church tell us: "the Social Doctrine of the Church is an essential part of the Christian message, since it points out the direct consequences of that message in the life of society, and situates daily work and the struggles for justice in the context of bearing witness to Christ our Saviour. This is not a marginal interest or activity or one that is tacked on; it is at the very heart of Christian ministry." (Compendium 67.)

So our basic Christian calling, our witness to Christ, includes working for social justice and social love.

2. What can we do to work for a better society, to work for the common good of all of us?

3. The way to do this is to work in solidarity, which means to work with others to change things for the better.

4. Solidarity means realizing that God has created us to live in interdependence with one another, all of us supporting and strengthening one another.

5. This is obvious in the family: from the moment of our birth we depended upon the solidarity of our family, parents, brothers, sisters, for our growth and development.

6. There are many examples of what solidarity has accomplished in society: e.g. the trade union Solidarity in Poland that brought about the downfall of the Communist government; the whole trade union movement that has brought about adequate wages and better working conditions for workers, which has also raised the standard of wages and working conditions for non-union workers; all the organizations working to improve living conditions like our Catholic Development and Peace Organization for poor countries.

7. You can start off working in solidarity in your parish or workplace by getting one or two others to join you, in whatever you want to do for the good of your group.

8. As Catholics baptized into Christ, we must always remember that we are not working alone. Jesus tells us in the Second Reading: "my grace is sufficient for you, for (my) power is made perfect in (your) weakness."

9. Jesus lives in us and works in us and through us. He gives us the power of his Spirit to do things that we could not do of ourselves.

10. We must also show social charity, social love, in all our activity to make things better. Social love is necessary to bring about justice. Social love means working together in groups and between groups for unity, respect and good will towards all, as common members of the human family. Social justice by itself will not unite people in harmony.

Transition to Eucharist

Now we renew our Covenant bond in Christ who tells us:

"This is the cup of my blood of the new covenant"

Let us pray to be renewed and strengthened by the power of Christ's self-giving, united in going forth to work for his Covenant of justice, love and peace.