

Homily for 14th Sunday Ordinary Time YR B

Ez 2:2-5 2Cor 12:7-10 Mk 6:1-6

A Call to a Prophet Life

Today's readings explain how prophets and other messengers from God inevitably suffer rejection. The readings challenge us to face rejection and hardship with prophetic courage.

We see the stories of rejection in the lives of the prophet Ezekiel, St Paul and Jesus. They are stories that we can identify with because it is a story that has happened to most of us. We might have experienced the pain of rejection caused by hurts, betrayal, divorce, abandonment, violated trust, trauma, neglect, or abuse in its various forms.

What about rejection by those closest to us? We take for granted the people that we know, we take for granted our families, friends, good neighbours. And because of that we fail to listen to them and refused to accept the words of grace, love, and encouragement that they offer to us.

Jesus Christ was despised in His own town. Christianity is despised or rejected in so many parts of the world.

There is much rebellion in our time against God, against nature, against divine institutions (the Church), and the fabrics of our moral, social, and cultural heritage.

It is strange that messages urging compassion, forgiveness, love, freedom, respect, truth, justice and peace, always arouse opposition, hostility, persecution, insults, rejection, hatred and even death.

Unfortunately, these are things we do not want to do. This is because we do not like discomfort. So, we want everyone to like us and to say only good things about us.

So, even when things go wrong under our watch, we are afraid to speak out. Our attitude is that of: "Please, let the sleeping dog lie so that I can have my peace." I do not want to hurt anybody. I do not want to lose him or her.

So, God speaks to us today as he said to Ezekiel in our first reading: "I am sending you... to the people who have turned against me." Many of you as Christians are called not to be Christian revolutionaries. We are called simply to be good Catholic Christians by the way we live, by the way we respect, care, and love other people. People will know you are Christian by the way you care and love others.

We need to handle rejection in the right spirit: We can handle rejection with respect – respect for ourselves and respect for others.

We are not perfect, and we do not always get it right. Every rejection can be a lesson if we stay open to new possibilities and new opportunities.

Let us acknowledge the prophets of God's goodness in our midst. God is present, giving us his message through our nearest and dearest and our neighbours and co-workers. Since God

uses them as His prophets to convey His message to us, it is our duty to acknowledge and honour them.

Let us express our appreciation today for our families, friends, and neighbours. A word of appreciation for the person who cooks for us, for the neighbour who is always ready to share our happiness and sorrow, for the friends who give us their time, support, and love and to all God's messengers of love and light.

Let us not take for granted the presence of God among us as evidenced by the goodness shown by family and friends.

We must have the prophetic courage of our convictions. Jesus taught us to give respect and freedom to others, without condoning or encouraging sinful behaviour. Love does not tolerate destructive behaviour.

The task of a prophet/Christian is to speak God's truth and promote truth. We must never be afraid of this call.

We can be kind, charitable, and honest and forgiving as we speak forth our own convictions as Jesus did in the synagogue. **We need "to speak the Truth of Christ with love," never being hypocritical or disrespectful.**

We must never remain silent in the face of evil. We must have the courage to oppose the many evils in our society so that good might triumph over evil, truth over a lie, light over darkness and peace over war. We must be the voice that cries against injustice, oppression, immorality, corruption, and ungodliness in our society.

May we grow in our relationship with God through prayer, holy reading and constant openness to God's goodness, beauty, and love.

Come to me, all who labour and are burdened, and I will refresh you, says the Lord (Communion Antiphon).

Fr Patrick