

Sunday, June 28, 2020

13th Sunday of Ordinary Time

Meditation and Questions for Reflection or Group Discussion

Mass Readings:

1st Reading: 2 Kings 4:8-11, 14-16

Responsorial: Psalm 89:2-3, 16-19

2nd Reading: Romans 6:3-4, 8-11

Gospel: Matthew 10:37-42

The Holy Spirit Can Speak Prophetically Through Us and Through Others

Whoever receives a prophet because he is a prophet . . . (Matthew 10:41)

So who exactly are these “prophets” Jesus is talking about?

In the early Church, it was common for men and women to be commissioned by the Church as traveling prophets. Their calling was to visit other churches and speak God’s word to them, just as Jesus sent out his disciples in today’s Gospel. They were called prophets because they were recognized as being able to speak God’s words under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. It was considered an honor to welcome such a person into your home and care for him while he ministered to your church—as the woman in today’s first reading cared for the Old Testament prophet Elisha.

As time went on, however, false prophets began to set themselves up in opposition to the local church leaders. Their presence and their messages caused division and confusion. Because it was fraught with controversy, the practice faded, and the official role of prophet fell to local bishops instead.

But that doesn’t mean that ordinary prophets disappeared from the Church. In fact, they’re all around us today. You may even be one! That’s because a prophet is nothing more—and nothing less—than someone through whom the Holy Spirit speaks.

That means that your spouse might be speaking prophetically when he or she encourages you to keep up with your prayer time. Or a child coming to you in the middle of the night might be bearing a prophetic message: *Time to deny yourself, take up your cross, and care for this little one.* And you may be a prophet when you tell a coworker about God’s work in your life.

God is always speaking to us. He’s always trying to get our attention. He’s always asking us to welcome his messengers into our lives. Even the ones we least expect.

“Holy Spirit, help me to hear you speaking through the people you will place in my path today.”

(Many thanks to *The Word Among Us* (www.wau.org) for allowing us to use meditations from their monthly devotional magazine. Used with permission.)

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Questions for Reflection or Discussion:

1. The first reading begins with these words: *One day Elisha came to Shunem, where there was a woman of influence, who urged him to dine with her. ... Sometime later Elisha arrived and stayed in the room overnight. It closes with these words: Later Elisha asked, "Can something be done for her?" His servant Gehazi answered, "Yes! She has no son, and her husband is getting on in years." Elisha said, "Call her." When the woman had been called and stood at the door, Elisha promised, "This time next year you will be fondling a baby son."*
 - The woman was rewarded with a son for her acts of kindness toward Elisha. In what ways do the Scriptures remind you of the following scriptures? In Luke 1:37, where the angel Gabriel responds to Mary's question with, *For nothing is impossible with God*, and in Luke 18:27, where Jesus says, *What is impossible with men is possible with God*.
 - What are the circumstances in your life that can seem impossible to you? How can you use the words in this reading and the words from Luke 1:37 and 18:27 to pray in faith for these circumstances?
2. The responsorial psalm opens with these words: *The promises of the LORD I will sing forever, through all generations my mouth shall proclaim your faithfulness. For you have said, "My kindness is established forever, in heaven you have confirmed your faithfulness."* The psalmist continues with these words: *Blessed the people who know the joyful shout; in the light of your countenance, O LORD, they walk. At your name they rejoice all the day, and through your justice they are exalted.* our response to this should be
 - How would you describe the Lord's *promises, faithfulness, and kindness* toward you? What has been your response to them?
 - The psalmist says that our response to the Lord's *promises, faithfulness, and kindness* should be one of singing, joyful shouting, rejoicing, and exaltation. Why should this be your response, as well? Is it?
3. The second reading begins with these words: *Brothers and sisters: Are you unaware that we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were indeed buried with him through baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might live in newness of life. If, then, we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him.* It ends with these profound words: *Consequently, you too must think of yourselves as dead to sin and living for God in Christ Jesus.*
 - In the opening words of the reading, St. Paul tells us of the wonderful graces of the Sacrament of Baptism. How would you describe the graces of Baptism to someone who asked you?
 - In what ways do you believe that Jesus came to die on the cross not only for our sins, but also to put to death the very principle in us that keeps us sinning, so that we are *dead to sin and living for God in Christ Jesus*??
 - How have you experienced the power of Baptism and the power of the cross to overcome the power of sin?
4. In the Gospel reading, Jesus speaks these words to his apostles: *Whoever does not take up his cross and follow after me is not worthy of me. Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.* The reading ends with these words: *Whoever receives a prophet because he is a prophet will receive a prophet's reward ... And whoever gives only a cup of cold water to one of these little ones to drink because the little one is a disciple—amen, I say to you, he will surely not lose his reward.*
 - What message so you think Jesus was trying to convey to the apostles with his words? How do they apply to you?
 - In what ways are the words of Jesus in the Gospel reading related to the first and second readings?
5. The meditation is a reflection on these words from the Gospel reading: *Whoever receives a prophet because he is a prophet . . . (Matthew 10:41).* It opens with these words: "So who exactly are these "prophets" Jesus is talking about? ... They were called prophets because they were recognized as being able to speak God's words under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit." It continues with these words: "But that doesn't mean that ordinary prophets disappeared from the Church. In fact, they're all around us today. You may even be one! That's because a prophet is nothing more—and nothing less—than someone through whom the Holy Spirit speaks."
 - What is your reaction to the meditation's definition of a prophet? Do you believe that you too are called to speak prophetically to others, i.e., under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit?
 - What is your reaction to the examples that were given in the meditation as to what it means to speak prophetically? What are some other examples from your life?

Take some time now to pray and ask the Lord, through the power of his Holy Spirit, for the grace to recognize when the Holy Spirit is speaking to you though others. Use the prayer below from the end of the meditation as the starting point.

"Holy Spirit, help me to hear you speaking through the people you will place in my path today."

[The discussion questions were created by Maurice Blumberg, who is currently a member of the board of directors of the ChristLife Catholic Ministry for Evangelization (www.christlife.org), a member of the National Service Committee Council of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal (www.nsc-chariscenter.org), and a board member of The Love of Christ Foundation. Prior to this, Maurice was the founding executive director of the National fellowship of Catholic Men, a chairman of the board of *The Word Among Us* (www.wau.org), and a director of partner relations for The Word Among Us Partners ministry. He can be contacted at mblumberg@wau.org or mblumberg@aol.com.]