

The time of the prophets has passed

The final prophet is Jesus Christ

But the time of prophetic witness remains

Because it is a time of witnessing to Jesus Christ

And that time will last until the end of time

Ezekiel was an O T prophet

Married young, his wife died

He lived at the time when the Kingdom of David was divided

He was of the priestly class of the southern kingdom

He was called *son of man* or *son of Adam*

In Greek, it means a human being

Although Jesus is called *Son of Man* as well

In Greek, these are different terms

Ezekiel is sent with an official message from God

And he is sent to a specific house of Israel

To a rebellious house

Indeed, it seems as if his mission is flawed from the beginning

At least humanly speaking

And Ezekiel is rejected

Or rather, the people of Israel rejected God

They choose to be orphans

To live outside their covenant with God

Even though they would not be faithful

God was, and is today, faithful to His covenant

St. Paul speaks of the life of a prophet

And the life of prophetic witnessing

When we read the life of St Paul

We know that he, too, is sent

And his life becomes a life of witnessing to Christ

He tells us in his letter to the Galatians:

"I have been crucified with Christ;

And it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me;

And the life which I now live in the flesh

I live by faith in the Son of God,

Who loved me and gave Himself up for me.

In our reading today

He is calling on the Corinthians to a greater fidelity to God's covenant

In his witness, he is afflicted

He is given a thorn in his side

Exactly what this was, we do not know

But it was impacting his ability to witness

At least humanly

He begs to be released from this thorn

But then we hear God's side

My grace is sufficient for you

For power is made perfect in weakness

And Paul begins to grasp that real power is found in vulnerability

When we find ourselves capable

We tend to rely on ourselves and our abilities

But when we are powerless or afflicted

We are more likely to turn to God

The source of our power and life

And allow him to work through us

This is Paul's example of prophetic witness

Based on Christ's example in his passion

When it seemed he was at his lowest point

Taken prisoner, beaten and condemned to die

He shows his strength and the victory of the resurrection

Ezekiel knew what it was to be ignored

St Paul experienced it as well

Even Christ experiences this

Who is this?

Isn't this the son of Joseph and Mary?

Isn't he the kid from down the block?

Didn't he grow up in the next town?

Isn't this familiar?

Why do we dislike our neighbor?

They think different from us in Wauzeka?

C'mon on, they're from Grant County

Or worse yet, from Iowa or Minnesota

Those living in the big city of La Crosse don't understand us

Do you want to know how bad this can get?

We don't even have to leave Holy Family parish

Much less the Catholic Church as a whole

Even today, there are those that refuse to step into St Gabe's or St John's

Yes, I believe it is getting much better

But that undercurrent still comes out at times

And it is my belief that we need to hear this in our midst

To name it; so we can heal it

We need prophetic witnesses to rise up

If we cannot heal this among ourselves

In our local community

How can we expect to face a larger persecution in our land?

And, yes, I believe we can expect persecutions to come

When we stand on the Truth

And our government rules the Truth doesn't matter

At Jesus' darkest moment

Pontius Pilate asked:

Truth; what is truth?

The supreme court of our land has asked the same thing

And they have come down squarely on the side of relativism

Truth is no longer a foundational principal

They have thrown out the foundation of marriage

It is no longer one man and one woman

Entering into a covenantal relationship with each other and with God

It is now a meaningless thing based on feelings

There is no more permanency

It is no longer the basis of a family

No longer the basis of Western civilization

And when we stand up for our convictions

When we will be called to stand up for ancient teachings

Teachings that others have died for

St John the Baptist, St Thomas More, St Charles Lwanga and others

We will be accused of being hateful and bigots

But stand up we must

Not in a hateful manner

We will not attack others in their beliefs

But we are called to challenge them

To walk with them to find the Truth

St. Theresa of Avila wrote in her book, *The Way of Perfection*

You see the gift our Lord intends for us

May be by far the best

But if it is not what we wanted

We are quite capable of flinging it back in his face

That is the kind of people we are:

Ready cash is the only wealth we understand

God gave us the gift of marriage

A covenantal bond

The marriage bond is an image of the Holy Trinity itself

Something we can see and yearn for

As we strive for that which we cannot see

Marriage between one man and one woman is a gift from God

But with this recent Supreme Court decision

It is a gift our nation's government has flung back in His face

It is the same with the gift of life and so many rulings on abortion

It is the same with rulings on Euthanasia

Not only for the elderly

But for anyone that might desire death in the moment

It is the same for any number of rulings that may come about

The only wealth we understand is ready cash

Feelings and emotions

Personal gratification and a personal view of liberty and freedom

An idea that actually makes us slaves rather than free

Our nation's law has rejected God's law and our covenant

In light of this, we are all called to prophetic witness

To witness to the Truth

Yes, I believe there will be accusations and persecutions

But as Fr Robert Baron writes in our bulletin article this week

This is nothing new for the Church

Ezekiel and the O T prophets experienced it

Christ bore it on the cross

Paul and so many modern saints witnessed it

It seems to be headed our way as well

Our response is centered in the celebration of the Eucharist

Asking Christ for his strength in our weakness

Joining our voices with all believers;

The saints in heaven, the poor souls in purgatory and those still in this world

Seeking what is above

What is noble, right and true

Being light to a darkened world

The time of prophetic witness lives on