

**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**