

Catechist Handout

Lesson 8 – 12/05/2021

Prophetic Justice

5:15-6:45pm - Small group/dismissal

Lesson Introduction

Remember the covenant, God's invitation of friendship.

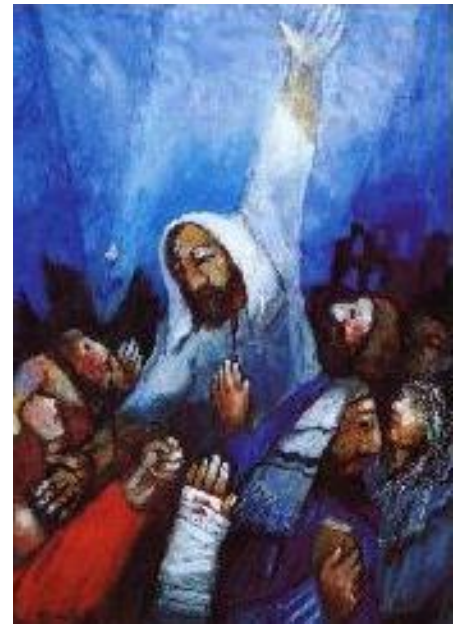
“And you shall be my people, and I will be your God.”

The Biblical covenant, is a **sacred partnership** between God and us, forged in love. It includes both a close personal friendship with God that will last forever and a **relationship with all of God's people**.



As Catholics, we believe you cannot have one without the other.

“I am the Lord, the God of Abraham your father - I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go; I will never leave you.”



A prophet is one who speaks on behalf of God.

Covenants include **promises** each side makes to the other. The promises we make to God as part of our covenant with Him are

1 We have only one God

“You will have no other gods before me.” Ex. 20:3

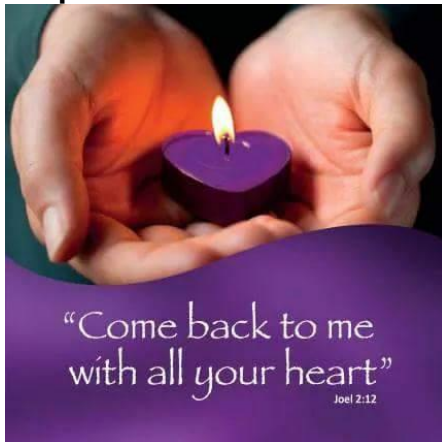
This means putting God first in our life.

2 We will follow the ways of the Lord

“Be careful, therefore, to do as the Lord, your God, has commanded you, not turning aside to the right or to the left, but following exactly the way that the Lord, your God, commanded you...” Deut. 5:32-33

Keeping God's commandments means to love God and neighbor.

Prophets as Guardians of the Covenant



Promises made are not always kept. This is the part of the story of our friendship with God told in the Bible and, if we are honest, is the truth of our experience. We do not always put God first in our lives. We do not always follow God's ways.

As we have discussed in previous lessons, when God's people fail to keep their side of the covenant, **instead of ending the relationship, God calls his people back** to the covenant. God does this in a number of ways. One of the ways God calls his people back is by sending special messengers.

The Bible defines a prophet as a spokesperson for God. The prophet reports to the community what God speaks to him or her.

Learning Task # 1

Read Joel 2:12-14

Compare the following translations of this passage. Sometimes reading the same passage from different translations can help us better understand a passage of scripture. The highlighted phrases are an example of how the language used in one translation may make the passage easier to understand.

Joel 2:12-14 – New American Bible Translation

Your Catholic Youth Bible uses this translation

Yet even now—**oracle of the Lord**—
return to me with your whole heart,
with fasting, weeping, and mourning.

Rend your hearts, not your garments,
and return to the Lord, your God,
For he is gracious and merciful,
slow to anger, abounding in steadfast love,
and relenting in punishment.
Perhaps he will again relent
and leave behind a blessing.

Joel 2:12-14 – The Message Translation

But there's also this, it's not too late—
God's personal Message! —
“Come back to me and really mean it!
Come fasting and weeping, sorry for your sins!”

Change your life, not just your clothes.
Come back to God, your God.
And here's why: God is kind and merciful.
He takes a deep breath, puts up with a lot,
This most patient God, extravagant in love,
always ready to cancel catastrophe.
Who knows? Maybe he'll do it now,
maybe he'll turn around and show pity.
Maybe, when all's said and done,
there'll be blessings full and robust for your God!

Answer the following questions about the passage above

1. How does Joel's message that when we fail to keep our side of the covenant, instead of ending the relationship, God give us a chance to repair the friendship make you **feel**?
2. What is the prophet Joel telling us about God in this passage?
3. What do you think the prophet means when he says, **Change your life, not just your clothes**?
4. Describe in your own words, a blessing **you have experienced** in your life because of being forgiven.

Presentation of the Topic

- ❑ **Prophets are chosen by God.** People do not decide to become prophets. The People of God do not elect or appoint prophets. God alone chooses who will be a prophet. Though being chosen for such a special role is affirming, it can also be intimidating. Often, the people God calls to be a prophet do not think they are the best person for the job.

Learning Task # 2

Read Jeremiah 1:4-10 and answer the following questions

1. God tells Jeremiah, "Before you saw the light of day, I had holy plans for you." How does it make you feel to know that, like Jeremiah, God has a plan for your life?
2. Jeremiah tells the Lord not to choose him as a prophet because he is too young. Why do you think Jeremiah saw this as a limitation?
3. God tells Jeremiah that his job is "to pull up and tear down, take apart and demolish, and then Start over, building and planting." How might being young actually help Jeremiah do this job?



Think: What in your life might you see as a limitation that God might see as a strength or asset?

★ You do not have to provide a written response to this question, just think about it.

4. What do you think Jeremiah was hoping we would learn about God, by sharing this encounter he had with God?
5. What do you think Jeremiah was hoping we would learn about ourselves, by sharing this encounter he had with God?

□ Watch this video - The Prophets - www.youtube.com/watch?v=edcqUu_BtN0&t=202s

Learning Task # 3

Fill out the **Video Review Sheet**

- **The Bible tells us there were different types of prophets.**
 - Some worked alone and traveled from place to place – like Jesus
 - Some were attached to a particular place – John the Baptist did his preaching at the Jordan River
 - Some worked and traveled in groups
 - Some were prophets their whole lives, while others were prophets for only a while.
- **God communicated with prophets in many ways.** Some heard God speak to them directly, some has visions, others had dreams in which God spoke to them, and still others felt God was speaking to them in their hearts or through other people.
- **The prophets used a range of methods to communicate God's Word to the people.**
 - Some were great orators, public speakers and teachers that drew large crowds (**Deut. 29:2-29** Moses Addresses the People).
 - Some used music; think of King David and the Psalms.
 - Ezekiel often acted out his message using street theatre (**Ezekiel 4:1-8**),
 - Still others performed miracles (**1 Kings 17:7-16** - Elijah and the Widow at Zarephath).

□ *Read* the article: **21 Jewish Prophets Everyone Should Know**

www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/4058906/jewish/21-Jewish-Prophets-Everyone-Should-Know.htm

Learning Task # 4

Answer the following question

1. List two (2) things you learned from reading this article.
2. Which of the prophets listed in this article do you wish you knew more about?

❑ Modern Day Prophets

Today we are more likely to talk about **prophetic voices** rather than prophets. As a result, people often think the only prophets are the ones named in the Old Testament. The truth is **the Holy Spirit calls forth prophets in every age**, in both the religious and secular worlds.

In the New Testament, John the Baptist, Jesus, and Mary, the Mother of God, are recognized as prophets. Acts 15:32 speaks of two prophets named Judas and Silas.

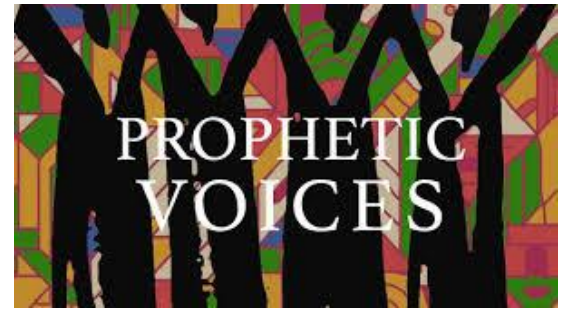
St. Paul frequently writes in his epistles about prophecy as one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit (see the passage below from St. Paul's first letter to the Corinthians (**1 Cor. 12:4-11**)).

"There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone, it is the same God at work.

Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. To one there is given through the Spirit a message of wisdom, to another a message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, to another miraculous powers, to another **prophecy**, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he distributes them to each one, just as he determines."

❑ The message of the prophets, then and now, usually has to do with **justice and morality**.

- Prophets are **keen observers** of their societies.
- Prophets see and point out the ways in which their communities are failing to live up to their values.
- As social critics, prophets call on their audiences to renew their commitment to live out their values. As Catholic Christians, we are called to hear all the voices of all those who **remind** and **encourage** us to honor the values we hold as we try to love God and each other (both religious and secular)
Many refer these values as **gospel values**.
- Prophets are often seen as social activists and reformers.



Gospel Values

are...

gospel values to include the values that guide the **systems, structures** and **social institutions** of modern life.

3. **Gospel values** are the values Christians use to define the **common good** (what is best for everyone).

1. What Jesus said, what Jesus did and what He told us to do.

2. The basis of Christian morality. Before the 20th century they were primarily applied to individual and interpersonal relationships (relationships we have with groups of people).

With the development of **Catholic Social Teaching (1891 to the present)** the Catholic Church extended the meaning of the term

Learning Task # 5

Identify ten (10) **gospel values** – values you see expressed in the life of Jesus (i.e. compassion, trust, courage...). Record your responses **or** create a piece of **Word Art**.

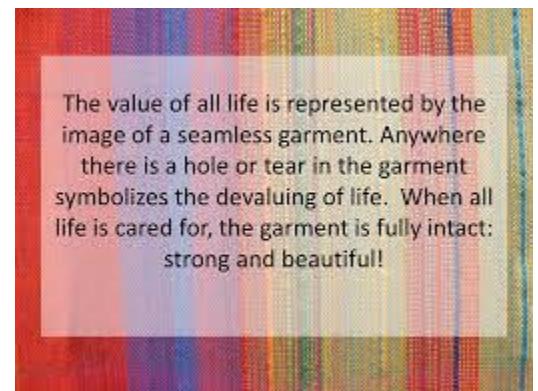
☐ Check out these American Catholics who have been identified as 20th century prophets.

- **Sister Miriam MacGillis, Fr. Thomas Berry, Molly Burhans and Pope Francis**, leaders of the **Catholic Environmental Justice movement**. **Molly Burhans** was the 2019 recipient of the **United Nations' Young Champions of the Earth Prize** for North America.
- **Sister Helen Prejean** of New Orleans, fights to abolish the death penalty in the U.S.
 - ★ Watch the 1995 movie, **Dead Man Walking**, which tells the early story of Sr. Helen.
- **Dorothy Day** (1897-1980) and **Peter Maurin** (1877-1949) – founders of the **Catholic Workers (CW) Movement**, best known for their **houses of hospitality**, which provide food, shelter and clothing to anyone in need. Today, over 200 **CW** communities operate houses of hospitality - 178 in the United States and 29 international communities.
 - ★ Watch the movie "**Entertaining Angels: The Dorothy Day Story**" – available free online at www.youtube.com/watch?v=SAdk7G1N-YY
- **Sister Mary Haddad**, president and CEO of the **Catholic Health Association** of the United States (CHA). Sr. Mary reminds us that the Catholic Church is the largest non-government provider of health care services in the world and that Catholic healthcare facilities continue to serve a greater number of poor and uninsured patients in the U.S.
- **Fr. J. Bryan Hehir** and Chicago priest **Fr George Clements** (1932-2019), leaders in the Catholic Church for **racial justice**.

Fr. Clements started the **One Church, One Child** program to increase the adoption of African American youth, the group of children least likely to be adopted. Fr. Clements eventually adopted four sons (Joey, Friday, Stewart and Saint Anthony).

 - ★ Watch the 1987 movie "**The Father Clements Story**," www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Wc_2112B6c
- **Dolores Clara Fernández Huerta** and **Cesar Chavez**, Catholic American labor leaders and civil rights Activists, co-founded **the farm worker movement**, to fight against agribusiness, and organize thousands of laborers so they could earn a living wage and have just working conditions, through the **United Farm Workers of America** (UFW) union.
 - ★ The 2014 film, **Cesar Chavez**, is available on Hulu, Netflix and Amazon Prime
- **Fr. John Ryan** (1869-1945) – an American Catholic priest, noted moral theologian, teacher, advocate of social justice and political activist on behalf of the poor.

Fr. Ryan made important contributions to American political life and economic thought. He was among the first Americans to advocate for a legal **minimum wage** in the U.S (1906).
- **Cardinal Joseph Bernardin** (1928-1996) - Archbishop of Chicago from 1982-1996, known for his influential work toward **Church reform** and leadership among the Bishops of the United States. Cardinal Bernardin is best known for developing his "**Seamless Garment Ethic of Life**" and his work on **ecumenism** (unity among Christians) and **interfaith dialogue**.



☐ You are a prophet!

You were baptized, **priest, prophet** and **king** (leader), so you can carry on the mission and ministry of Jesus.



Anointed with oil and filled with the Holy Spirit, we are sent forth, in Christ's name, to bring glad tidings to the poor, proclaim liberty to captives, recovery of sight to the blind and let the oppressed go free, (Luke 4:18).

➤ As **priest**, we are called to be saints, cultivating within ourselves the ability to know in any given moment, in any given situation what is needed.

➤ As **prophet**, we are God's messengers. We

share God's word with others, through our words and deeds.

➤ As **kings**, we are called to be servant leaders. Servant leaders put the needs of others before their own. They work to foster the **common good**.

Prayer Experience

- Find a quiet place. Take a few deep breaths to quiet your mind
- Listen to Matt Remans's song **Send Me Lord** - www.youtube.com/watch?v=V5djgBfOIOA
- **Pray** Martin Luther King, Jr.'s prayer **Use Me, God** →

