

Catechumenate Session

APPRENTICES IN FAITH: A Resource for the RCIA
 Fourteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time • Year B • July 7, 2024



*O God,
 you have spoken
 to us through your prophets
 that we might be led
 in your way
 and according to your truth.
 May the seeds
 of your Word
 bear great fruit.*

Sunday Word

Ezekiel 2:2-5
 Psalm 123:1-4
 2 Corinthians 12:7-10
 Mark 6:1-6a

A Prophet Among Them

Ezekiel receives his “calling card” from the Lord God. He is to go to the people and he is to speak God’s word. Whether Ezekiel is accepted or rejected, he must do this work so that the Israelites know that a prophet has been among them.

The Power of Christ

Saint Paul realizes that God’s grace is sufficient for him and his ministry. Even if he himself is weak or suffering, the power of Christ will dwell within Paul.

The Honor of a Prophet

Jesus journeys to his hometown and teaches in the synagogue. The people react negatively, rejecting him. Jesus acknowledges that prophets are honored, except in their native place.

Church Teaching: Prophets and Prophecy

Old Testament Times

The Hebrew term for prophet (*nabi'*) appears almost three hundred times in the Old Testament. The prophet is one who is called by God to convey a message to God’s people. Old Testament prophets formed a people in the hope of Salvation and in the expectation of a covenant written on their hearts; proclaimed a radical Redemption of God’s people from their unfaithfulness, a Redemption that ultimately would include all peoples; and revealed by the conduct of their own lives the undying love of God for God’s people.

God’s message, conveyed by the prophets, sought to criticize or energize the people. For example, criticizing might focus on infidelity or false worship, a misplaced reliance on humanity, or the exploitation of the poor by the rich. Energizing the people might focus on helping them see a different future; actively promoting God’s rule such that the unexpected would become the normal (e.g., the lamb lying down with the wolf); announcing the new creation accomplished by God (Isaiah 65); and announcing the coming of the Messiah. Both criticizing and

energizing are meant to move people to make decisions consistent with God's will.

Old Testament prophets like Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Hosea manifested God's promise, which remained hidden until it was clarified and fulfilled in Jesus Christ. The long line of Old Testament prophets culminated in John the Baptist, who, while declining the title of prophet (John 1:9-23), nevertheless functioned as the final one who pointed to Jesus as the Lamb of God (John 1:36).

Jesus, the Eternal Word made Flesh

The proof of that declaration is in the very life, ministry, and Paschal Mystery of Christ. Jesus takes up the Old Testament themes of prophecy (Luke 4:18-19). He perfectly fulfills his mission and is called the Christ, the Anointed One of God. He is understood by believers to be anointed by the Holy Spirit for the threefold task of Priest, Prophet, and King.

In the course of his ministry, Jesus is prophetic, but unlike the prophets of old, he is the fullness of God's Revelation. While he himself speaks God's word to the people, Jesus is, indeed, the Eternal Word made flesh.

Prophecy After Christ

We believe prophecy continued in the early Church. Its reference point, however, centered in Christ (see Acts 2:14-21). In addition, prophecy in the early days of the Christian community helped to build up the Church, Christ's Body, in an organized manner, such as regulated by Paul in 1 Corinthians 14:29-33.

The early Church also experienced false prophets (see Matthew 7:15, 2 Peter 2:1; 4:3) and teachers (see 2 Timothy 4:3). Jezebel is identified as a false prophet who misled the church at Thyatira (see Revelation 2:20-23). To avoid the deception of false prophets, believers are advised to exercise discernment (see 1 John 4:1).

Distinctiveness of Church Teaching

From the time of Jesus onward, no new revelation will be received from on high, since Christ himself is the fullness of Revelation. We may certainly delve deeper into the message given in Christ, and individual believers may be characterized as "prophetic." However, no additional prophecy is needed—for all has been given in the gift of Jesus' life, ministry, and Paschal Mystery.

Key Terms

CHRIST

Greek translation of Hebrew *Messiah*, meaning "anointed"; term applied to Jesus (see *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 436).

PROPHET

Person sent by God to form his people in expectation of the Messiah (see *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 702).

REVELATION

God's self-communication to humanity in which he makes known to us the mystery of his divine plan, which culminates in Christ (see *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 50).

Voices of Faith

At the end of the ages is fulfilled that which was ordained from all eternity: and in the presence of realities, when signs and types have ceased, the Law and prophecy have become Truth: . . .

—Pope Saint Leo the Great

. . . humanity today seeks a path of renewal, of salvation, it seeks a Savior and awaits, sometimes unconsciously, the coming of the Savior who renews the world and our life, the coming of Christ, the one true Redeemer. . . . Of course, false prophets continue to propose a salvation "at a cheap price," that always ends by producing searing disappointments.

—Pope Benedict XVI

Further Reading

Catechism of the Catholic Church: 711 (prophetic lines lead to Messiah and a new Spirit), 714 (Jesus quotes Isaiah), 717 (John was sent by God), 783 (Jesus: priest, prophet, king), 66 (no further revelation)

United States Catholic Catechism for Adults: Chapter 2 (God Comes to Meet Us), especially the section entitled "God Reveals His Loving Plan to Save Us," pages 12–15

Compendium—Catechism of the Catholic Church: 9 (fullness of Revelation in Christ), 82 (Christ means "Messiah"), 102 (preparation for Christ), 140 (prophets)

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