

Fr. Brian Timoney's weekend reflection on the challenges of living life as a prophet...

In an un-named diocese a Bishop was interviewing a young man who was to be ordained that year. The seminarian said to the bishop; "I don't mind where you send me for my first assignment as long as it is not my home parish, because, as you know, bishop, a prophet is not accepted in his own country."

"Young man", said the bishop, "you don't have to worry, no one will ever mistake you for a prophet."

In this instance I think the bishop was wrong, because every baptized Christian, each one of us is called to be a prophet, not in the popular, mistaken sense of being able to foretell the future, but in the true biblical sense of being people called by God to awaken the conscience of the world, to proclaim, by the way we live our lives, the truth of God's word in Holy Scripture, even if, at times that opens us up to ridicule.

Last Wednesday, we celebrated 56 men who signed the Declaration of Independence, the Founding Fathers. You may recognize Franklin, Hancock, Jefferson, Adams, Carroll but what about the others. For most of us, they are nameless.

Yet, they were all not only extremely brave, but also real prophets in the sense that they still challenge us to be faithful to the ideals that they set forth, the truths that they found "to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness."

These men were significant in their own day and will be significant forever, true prophets, forever challenging us. They were prepared to die for their beliefs.

For not only all Christians, but for all the world, Jesus is the true prophet supreme, who actually DID die for his beliefs. He was not highly regarded in his own day. His family thought he was crazy.

Others were saying: "Who does he think he is? He is just the son of the carpenter; his mother is at the well every day just like all the women. He is a nobody."

Yes, Jesus was rejected; he was not seen as a prophet. However, we now know that he was and is the greatest of all the prophets. His words, his life, his example of forgiveness and love has inspired and continues to challenge millions of people.

Jesus was truly significant.

By our baptism, we are called to be significant, to make our mark on this world.

We may not be memorable for our genius or our status in life; we may be "nobodies" but we can have a huge impact on our own society.

We can be, indeed we are called to be significant in the lives of others by the WAY we live our lives.

Please, please do not underrate yourself. You do not have to be a theologian. You do not have to shout from a soap box; you do not have to join marches, though at times that may be appropriate, you do not have to ring door bells.

You just have to be your own genuine Christian self.

That reminds me of story of a priest friend of mine in India, Fr. Eddie Lobo. His parish was in Lucknow, a very Hindu city. The church handyman, gardener was a Hindu who lived in a village just outside the city.

One day Fr. Eddie asked him if he should bring along some medicines when he went to visit the village.

The man asked him: "Are you a doctor or a guru, a teacher?" Fr. Eddie replied: "I am a guru."

"Then, as you enter the village there is a big tree. Sit under the tree with a picture of your God and say your prayers and if anyone asks you what you are doing, then you can tell them about your God."

Simple, simple. We don't have to do extraordinary things to have an impact, to be significant in the lives of others.

The Christian life, by itself, if fully lived, is prophetic because it proclaims the truth about Jesus Christ. He challenges us at every turn, he challenges the world and we are the instruments of that challenge...

At home, at work, at play... live up to your calling. Be a prophet.