

The First Reading for Holy Mass is taken from 1Sam.3:3b-10,19

In the Old Testament, we see several men and women that were set apart and called by God to the Prophetic ministry. Men and women who would be so inspired by the Word of God that they would challenge the status quo of their day, whether convenient or inconvenient. Most of the time, this challenging of the status quo is inconvenient, and we see that the Prophets of old were very often rejected, ridiculed or put to death for their ministry. For most of us prefer our "comfort zones" and accommodations to the Word of God, instead of listening to the challenge of the Word of God.

We know that the greatest of the Prophets is Jesus Christ. And in fact, in the Gospel of Luke, (4:18-19), we see that Jesus began his public ministry by quoting the Prophet Isaiah: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has chosen me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free the oppressed and announce a year of favor from the Lord."

We see that much of the hatred, jealousy and rejection of Jesus by the religious establishment was precisely because of his Prophetic stance against their misinterpreting and misrepresenting the Word of God. Jesus was constantly challenging their narrow understanding of the Word of God, and their status quo. Jesus did not gain any favor from the Scribes nor Pharisees when Jesus called them: "hypocrites, brood of vipers, blind guides, fools." Nor did Jesus get in their good graces by claiming to be the Son of His Heavenly Father, and by showing the Love and Tenderness of His Father to the outcasts, the blind, the lepers, the lame and the sinners.

For His Prophetic challenges toward the religious and civil authorities, Jesus Christ was rejected and put to death.

In the Acts of the Apostles, we see this Prophetic ministry continuing, as the Apostles and disciples receive the "Power from on High" on the day of Pentecost. This Holy Spirit enabled the Apostles and disciples to carry on the message and ministry of Jesus Christ to the "whole world". And in fact, in Acts 5:29, after the Apostles had been threatened and put into jail for talking about "that Name", Peter declares before the High Priest and his Council, "We must obey God, not men."

We see that this conviction, based on their faith in the Resurrected Christ and compelled by the power of the Holy Spirit, led the early Apostles and disciples to much suffering, rejection, imprisonment and eventually death for many.

This Prophetic ministry has been exercised throughout the many generations by many courageous, faith-filled, self-sacrificing women and men who proclaim the Word of God with boldness and clarity. Many times, these Prophets have spoken the Word of God to correct or to stop abusive situations and/or treatment of our fellow human beings.

My brothers and sisters, and today, it is our turn to continue exercising this Prophetic ministry which we have received by the Power of the Holy Spirit at our