

Second Sunday in Ordinary Time – A – 2023
Isaiah 49.3-6///1 Corinthians 1.1-3///John 1.29-34

→there once was a doctor, a priest and an attorney in a fishing boat...their motor had died and one of their oars had been dropped into the water and was drifting away

→just as the doctor was about to dive into the water to retrieve it, the boat was surrounded by sharks...

→suddenly the doctor changed his mind about jumping in, saying.... “I can’t jump in now...someone might get bitten and they’ll need my medical services.”

→the priest then said, “[well]...I can’t go...because if someone suffers a fatal bite, I will have to give them the last rites.”

→and so they both looked at the attorney...to which he said....“fine, I’ll get the oar,” and he dove in

→well once the attorney was in the water all the sharks suddenly moved and swam away, allowing the attorney to retrieve the oar and get back into the boat totally unharmed.

→the doctor and priest were flabbergasted to which the attorney smiled and said.... “that’s what you call.....professional courtesy...one shark to another”

→now you may be thinking...what does that story have to do with today’s gospel...and true...it doesn’t appear to have an immediate connection, except *that someone had to have the **courage** to put their life on the line*

--[you know] since Francis became pope....his preaching and pastoral ministry has echoed a similar notion...

→Pope Francis has repeatedly preached....what our scriptures tell us today: that the Church [meaning you and me] must be a Church for the whole world

→and the Pope has gone on to say ...that we...people of faith...must become the evangelists and prophets of today, living and telling the good news to those in need of God's love

→i.o.w....like the attorney in the opening story...**someone** has to put their life...their faith...on the line

--[and] this is what we hear about today in our readings

PAUSE

→Isaiah speaks of the day when God's people would be a "***light to the nations***" so that God's "***salvation would reach to the ends of the earth.***"

→[and] John the Baptist declares that our Lord Jesus Christ was "***the Lamb of God taking away the sin of the world.***"

→and so TODAY, the Gospel we proclaim...the message we share and the faith we profess... needs to become the is good news for all on earth!

→in today's world...a prophet isn't someone with a crystal ball who does parlor tricks like mind reading or bending spoons...

→but rather a prophet has to be someone who offers people a new way of seeing....

→a true prophet is someone who calls each of us to a deeper conversion....a radical redemption...an unexpected hope

→a prophet...is someone whose message is usually difficult and challenging to hear.....because often it is....one that reminds us **that** the way things are...are not the way things have to be

→a **true** prophet is someone who sees our brokenness and knows that it can be made whole

→someone who mourns our sinfulness and knows that it can be healed

→someone who walks with captives and knows that we can be set free

→i.o.w....a true prophet is someone who puts their life...their faith on the line

And today as we hear, John the Baptist...was a true prophet...the forerunner of the Lord...the last of the Old Testament prophets...

John the Baptist is the completion of all those sent to announce the coming of the Lord that began with Elijah and ends with John

→...a true voice...who prepared the way for one greater than he....to bear witness to the Light...and to testify to the Son of God...

→as we hear....*behold...the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world*

→now you and I might never spend time in the desert....we probably won't live on locusts or honey like John did...and more than likely we won't be asked to lay down our lives or become a great saint

→but like John....we can witness to what we know and what we see

→like John...we can lift up our voices and testify to the Light

→[and] like John...we can make known to one another the presence of Christ

→because every time we hear the Word proclaimed and approach the altar to receive the Body and Blood of Christ....we should experience the same profound sense of witness that John experienced when he saw the Lord

→and in today's times...when in this country alone...fewer and fewer people claim any affiliation with any church

→when fewer people are making faith and religion a priority in their lives

→...when Christianity, once was the confession of faith for the vast majority of people and where now we find ourselves as the shrinking minority...

→when our society is quickly become God-less

→we all need to be prophets for one another....

→today, we are being reminded...that there **IS** another way of seeing

→we are being called to deeper conversion....to a radical redemption...to an unexpected hope

→today we are being reminded that the way things are....**are not** the way things have to be

→that our brokenness CAN be made whole

→sinfulness can be reconciled

→and those who are captive can be set free....

→today we are being called to be a prophet to one another

→to proclaim through our words...actions...and lives....what John proclaimed so boldly that day long ago...

Behold.... There is the lamb of God...who takes away the sins of this world