

Prophets

"You seduced me, LORD, and I let myself be seduced; you were too strong for me, and you prevailed. All day long I am an object of laughter; everyone mocks me. Whenever I speak, I must cry out, violence and outrage I proclaim; The word of the LORD has brought me reproach and derision all day long. I say I will not mention him, I will no longer speak in his name. But then it is as if fire is burning in my heart, imprisoned in my bones; I grow weary holding back, I cannot!"

(Jeremiah 20: 7-9)

Prophets: Thinking Differently

Relieving with their own hands, Jesus Christ suffering in a multitude of the sick and vulnerable people of every kind, in a way that promoted human dignity and educated in social justice, was the impetus that 150 years ago inspired our co-founders, Madeleine Chollet, Pierre Cinquin, Agnes Buisson. In fact, during this year of our sesquicentennial celebrations, we have had valuable opportunities to hear again their voices: critical, clear, and deeply committed to the poor. In one word: 'Prophets.'

Consequently, I dare to say that our first Sisters were convinced that in order to reduce the inequalities they encountered, they offered in their work a new way, a way that fostered Gospel values. In other words, a way that promoted respect for human rights. This legacy can be seen through the opening of various ministries in education, healthcare, and pastoral and social works, throughout the history of our Congregation: new ministries, those that needed to continue, and the ones that required complete transformation.

But what does it mean to be a prophet? For the theologian José María Castillo, "Prophets are the ones who speak for a specific situation and for specific people." This literally means, they speak specifically for each specific situation. Let us bring to our minds and hearts, the faces of those people who, with sensitive eyes and honest voices, show their commitment to the struggle for justice, peace and the care of creation, through works and words, as beautiful as they are powerful.

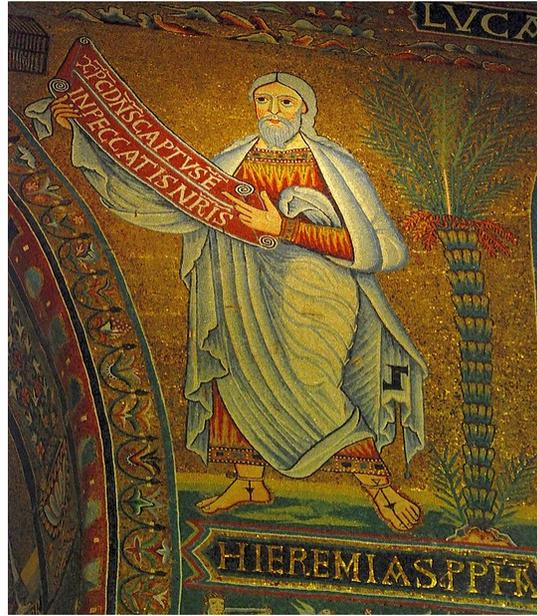
Here in Saint Louis Missouri, I have had the good fortune to become familiar with the story of our dear Sister Patricia Ann Kelley. Her life, legacy, and her unjust death is quite moving. Pat worked extensively to help the very poor. She was raped and murdered on September 27, 1987. She, along with so many other women who are murdered daily, bitterly remind us that women are continuously being killed, and the system is unable to stop it. It is not enough just to have institutions responsible for protecting women's rights. Through her life's work, Pat



pointed out the urgent need to do more to prevent violence.

For me, it is the prophet who maintains God's dream: "I have come that you might have life, and life in abundance." It is that person who requires us to take off the blinders that the system imposes on us, making us insensitive to the victims. Prophets are those people who have the ability to show us our resilience and solidarity, but who also remind us that change in society depends on each one of us using those qualities. We must insist, and insist again, even when the message is difficult or unpleasant.

The prophet Jeremiah said: "You seduced me, LORD, and I let myself be seduced; you were too strong for me, and you prevailed. All day long I am an object of laughter; everyone mocks me. Whenever I speak, I must cry out, violence and outrage I proclaim; The word of the LORD has brought me reproach and derision all day long. I say I will not mention him, I will no longer speak in his name. But then it is as if fire is burning in my heart, imprisoned in my bones; I grow weary holding back, I cannot!" (Jeremiah 20, 7-9).



We cannot remain silent. Our Lord Jesus Christ continues to suffer in a multitude of people, and places, enduring mistreatment, discrimination, and dehumanization. The Incarnate Word calls us, and waits for our hands to face with courage global warming.

Our prophets, tireless sowers of dreams, citizens of the world by choice, women with endless energy, with a love that one can feel, will accompany us on this journey. They, and so many others, demand that we convey what God wants, and what God expects today.

Question for reflection ...

Wherein lies the secret to the strength that a prophet of God has?