

4th Sunday in Ordinary Time 02/03/2019

Called to be Stars to the World

We have just listened to the reading of God's word about the call and mission of Jeremiah the prophet, and about Jesus our Savior and to an extent, about all of us. God says to Jeremiah, "Before I formed you in your mother's womb, I knew you". God formed Jeremiah, consecrated him and sent him for a mission. Jesus was also formed by God, consecrated and sent to become the Savior of the world. His people did not accept him. They doubted if he truly came from God. We heard in today's gospel that the people were angry and wanted to kill Jesus.

We have also been formed, chosen and sent by God. We are given a mission to be stars in the world. Let's remember Jesus' admonition: 'If the world hates you, realize that it hated me first...No slave is greater than his master. If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you.'" John 15:18,20. Anyone who tries to lead a Christian life today knows how true this is. Take young people in high school or college. It isn't long before some of them feel in their own lives the impact of what Jesus is talking about. Ask them what happens when they try to remain honest in exam and others around them are cheating. Ask them what happens when they try to remain chaste at a party and others around them are doing otherwise. Ask them what happens when they speak out against abortion and others around them are defending it. Ask them what happens when they speak out against discrimination and others around them are assassinating the character of minorities.

And what's true of young people is also true of older ones. We might have all experienced rejection and persecution for our faith at some time in our lives. But we can't let this keep us from defending the rights of the unborn or of minorities. And the reason is clear. Jesus said to his followers in the Sermon on the Mount: "You are the salt of the earth...You are the light of the world.... They (do not) light in a lamp and then

put it under a bushel basket; it is set on a lampstand...Just so, your light must shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your heavenly Father.”

Our vocation as Christians is to be prophets of the Father in our world, just as Jesus was a prophet of the Father in this world. This is what our baptism and confirmation were all about. In a world of darkness, we Christians are called to shine like stars.