

August 1, 2008
Friday of the Seventeenth Week in Ordinary Time
Memorial of Saint Alphonsus Liguori

Readings of the day may be found on the following link:

<http://www.nccbuscc.org/nab>

Jeremiah 26:1-9

Psalms 69:5, 8-10, 14

Matthew 13:54-58

Say to them: Thus says the LORD: "If you disobey me, not living according to the law I placed before you and not listening to the words of my servants the prophets, whom I send you constantly though you do not obey them, I will treat this house like Shiloh, and make this the city to which all the nations of the earth shall refer when cursing another.

But Jesus said to them, a prophet is not without honor except in his native place and in his own house." And he did not work many mighty deeds there because of their lack of faith. "

Both readings today remind me of the many prophets God has placed in the world in my lifetime. I wish I could say that I paid attention to them all. I am sure I have turned a deaf ear to much wisdom God sent my way. Unfortunately, spiritual immaturity, preoccupation with work and family life, and just plain laziness got in the way. But, as the saying goes, "when the student is ready, the teacher will come." And, many prophets did come into my life. They revealed to me the truth about life. And, for them, I am grateful. But, the prophets I want to remember today are the men and women who took a public risk to remind us of God's plan for life in general and our personal responsibility in bringing that plan to fruition. We all know about the prophets in the Bible. We know about the canonized saints, but what about the many others who never get mentioned, and, worse yet, the prophets among us today who are ridiculed and dismissed because of their mission. We might even argue among ourselves about who is a prophet and who is a heretic. How do we know? The question that I believe tests out the truth of the message is this: Does it bring us to greater love? Or, does the message bring us to more guilt, shame, rigidity, judgmental attitudes, and narrowly legalistic behavior? Let us remember today the prophets who live among us and risk their reputations and position to help us see the truth of God's message. Let us be grateful for them. But more importantly, let us take the time to notice their presence and listen to their message. Let it take us to a deeper knowledge of God and a greater capacity to love.

God is not what you imagine or what you think you understand. If you understand you have failed. ~Saint Augustine □ □