

He was a bookworm, quiet and unassuming in his demeanor. No one would have ever pegged him as someone who would make sizeable waves in the Catholic church's realm of social teaching. And yet God chose Archbishop Oscar Romero to change the course of history and send a tidal wave of change through the world. A role that would also include the ultimate sacrifice: his death by assassination on March 24, 1980. But isn't that God's modus operandi: He calls the most unlikely people to become prophets.

These people allow the Kingdom of God to break into human history; they are interruptions which show us new possibilities for the future. Often these interruptions challenge our way of thinking and how we conduct our lives.

Moses, a prophet himself, reminded his followers that God promised to raise up prophets from within their community and this news brought comfort to the elder leader as he saw his people go into the promised land; There will always be individuals who will shake the community out of its complacency and call them back to their covenant with God.

Of course the greatest prophet the world has ever known is Jesus Christ. He was born to shake the community and the world out of its old ways. He single handedly turned the Jewish Law upside down with his teaching to turn the other cheek, pray for those who persecute, and love our enemies. By healing and teaching with his own authority, especially on the Sabbath, Jesus put himself at odds with the authorities of his time. A perfect example of that confrontation was played out in our gospel

from Mark today. Jesus liberated a man oppressed by an unclean spirit and his actions opened the eyes of those present to a whole new realm of possibilities. He cast an authoritative vision for what God wants to do in our midst: provide liberation, healing, mercy, and salvation.

From that moment in the synagogue to our current times in 2018 God intends to interrupt our lives with the likes of Archbishop Oscar Romero, mother Theresa of Calcutta, Pope John Paul the II, and Pope Francis. These individuals and others like them confront our behaviors and beliefs that are not gospel based. They present us with a new vision of hope and possibility. By watching a leader like Pope Francis and listening to the words of Bishop Robert Barron we are challenged to speak out against oppression of all kinds and be signs of hope and agents of liberation.

Since I started this homily talking about Archbishop Oscar Romero, it is only fitting that I end with his words.

“Each one of you has to be God’s microphone. Each one of you has to be a messenger, a prophet. The church will always exist as long as there is someone who has been baptized... Where is your baptism? You are baptized in your professions, in the fields of workers, in the market. Wherever there is someone who has been baptized, that is where the church is. There is a prophet there. Let us not hide the talent God gave us on the day of our baptism and let us truly live the beauty and responsibility of being a prophetic people.”