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21 MONDAY

St Pius X

Monday, Week 20 of Year

Ezek. 24: 15 – 24  
(Ps) Deuter. 32: 18-21  
Matt 19: 16 - 22

We usually think of prophets as people who 'foretell' things or who 'speak for' the Lord. Their prophecy is in what they say, what they preach in the Lord's name. But today's reading from the book of Ezekiel shows a different kind of prophecy, a kind of "action-prophecy". The message is in what *happens* to Ezekiel and his *behaviour* afterwards, as a dramatic sign and symbol of what's going to happen to the people. (This isn't the only biblical case of a personal story carrying the Lord's message, but it is an especially poignant one, and surely heartbreaking for Ezekiel himself). The Lord told him he was about to lose his wife, but that he mustn't go into mourning. Instead, he's to show and tell the people that he's deliberately not in mourning because there isn't time for that. He himself is to be a powerful message and warning that, like him, they really have no time. Of course the people noticed his strange behaviour and asked him why. And the Lord's promise was that, from within the imminent calamity, people would come to know the Lord as their saviour.

Hearing God's word and recognising Him happens not only in the words of scripture or of prayers or homilies. We "hear" God also through people and events, sometimes quite dramatically, for example in heroic selfless behaviour in love or service to others. But oftentimes more quietly in the example of ordinary good people trying their best to love God and neighbour. In what happens in our own lives, too, we should be recognising God's word to us, and in our behaviour giving Christian "example", a word for other people about how God works.

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