

July 11th, 2021
15th Sunday in Ordinary Time
Cycle B

1st Reading: Amos 7:12 – 15.

*God takes Amos from his flocks and tree trimming and places him
as the prophet to Israel.*

Psalm 85:9 – 10, 11 – 12, 13 – 14.

God, let us see Your kindness, and grant us Your salvation.

2nd Reading: Ephesians 1:3 – 14.

God chooses and loves us all in the Christ.

Gospel: Mark 6:7 – 13.

God sends us to heal, to preach, and to bring Light into darkness.

God is good, **all the time**. All the time, **God is good**.

15th Sunday in Ordinary Time, almost halfway through it my friends, there are 33 of them before we begin the C cycle. In today's readings we continue with the values of "faith" in Christ's challenge and call to each of us to continue his mission. We, each of us, has been chosen, called, gifted, anointed at our Baptisms to carry this on.

In our first reading we hear about Amos, the first of the major prophets. Who is he? What are his gifts? He is a shepherd and a tree trimmer, an arborist. He is very good at each. Now he is called by God to be a prophet to the Israelite people in the Northern kingdom. He has no training or experience to apply to this new calling. Does he fail? You bet you he does? Does he quit? Absolutely not, he persists, he trusts in God's providence even in the face of royal expulsion. I love Abraham Joshua Heschel's definition of a prophet. He says, "a prophet's job is the 'ceaseless shattering of indifference.'" It does give me pause as to how often God's word gets all tangled up in my plans. when I witness some injustice or act of racism and say nothing or do nothing because it is

inconvenient, a bother, or might get me in trouble. Like Amos, it is important to remember that God is not calling us to succeed but to be persistent in bring God's kin-dom in our time and world. Praise God!

Paul begins his letter to the Ephesians in the style common to the time, it is a blessing of praise and thanksgiving to God who has given us every blessing we could ask for in and through Jesus, who makes it [possible for us to be known as a child of God, one of God's daughters or sons. Christ is the one responsible for our gift of ADOPTION and our sealing with the Holy Spirit which is a lavish gift and the first installment on what is yet to come, a reminder that we'll get everything God has planned for us, a praising, glorious and joy-filled life. Praise God!

Then in our Gospel Mark's version of the commissioning of the Apostles to complete Christ's mission. He sends them out in pairs because he knows we need one another, it is a ONE person show, but that person is Christ. I like Jack Shea's reflection where he envisions the debriefing of this first commissioning. The disciples return with their walking stick, their sandals and one tunic, but still without bread, bag, or money. As they report to Jesus what they did, whom they healed, and what they taught, Jesus asks, "Did you lack for anything?" They respond, "Well, no." Jesus says "Ahhh." Praise God!

Earlier today (yesterday) I attended Tony Romano's funeral mass. In his program Elsie shared a poem entitled "A Step Along the Way." It became famous as "Romero's Prayer," but was actually written by Bishop Ken Untener, when as auxiliary Bishop he wrote Cardinal Dearden's speeches. In this case it was his annual address to the priests at their convocation. When I heard it, I said that is it, that's what the message of today is:

"It helps now and then, to step back and take a long view.
The Kin-dom is not only beyond our efforts,
It is even beyond our vision.

We accomplish in our lifetime only a tiny fraction
Of the magnificent enterprise that is God's work.
Nothing we do is complete, which is a way of saying
That the kin-dom always lies beyond us.
No Statement says all that could be said.
No prayer fully expresses our faith.
No confession brings perfection.
No pastoral visit brings wholeness.
No Program accomplishes the Church's mission.
No set of goals and objectives includes everything.
This is what we are about.
We plant the seeds that one day grow.
We water the seeds already planted,
Knowing that they hold future promise.
We lay foundations that will need further development.
We provide yeast that produces far beyond our capabilities.
We cannot do everything,
And there is a sense of liberation in realizing that.
This enables us to do something, and to do it very well.
It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning, **a step along the way,**
An opportunity for the Lord's grace to enter and do the rest.
We may never see the end result, but that is the difference
Between the master builder and the worker.
We are workers, not master builders, ministers, not messiahs.
We are prophets of a future not our own. AMEN."

Praise God! We are called to live life differently, to love!

God is good, **all the time.** All the time, **God is good.**