

2021 July 11

Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

First Reading, Amos 7.12-15, "The Lord said to me, 'Go, prophesy to my people Israel,' (15b)

The Psalm 9, "Let me hear what the Lord will speak." (8a)

Second Reading, Ephesians 1.3-14, "In Christ we have also obtained an inheritance." (11a)

The Gospel, Mark 6.7-13, "Jesus called the twelve and began to send them out two by two." ("7a)

God's own people

We have two sending in our readings today. Prophet Amos is sent to prophesy to the people of Israel. Jesus sends his disciples to proclaim the good news to the people. In both cases the sender did not expect a universal and unhindered welcome. However, those sent did not have an option not to go. Prophet Amos was intercepted on the way by a priest who tried to dissuade him from his mission. The prophet did not budge, but went ahead; first prophesying to the bullying priest what was in store for him as per the divine design, and then fulfilling his mission to the people of Israel. To the priest and to the people the prophet's messages were bitter prescription. The life of the prophet was under threat. However, he had to obey the promptings of God.

To the disciples of Jesus at the time of his earthly existence and to their successors now at this time the mission has not been easy, and Jesus foretold that the task would likely be heavy, and rejections would be on the way. However, they were not to stop in the mission. If they are rejected in one place, they were to leave it behind and move to the next, and to the next, until they had had the proclamation to all nations and peoples on earth, till the very end of time.

St. Paul in his letter to the Ephesians explains the ultimate purpose of the sending mission of Christ, namely, to gather up all things in Christ, things in heaven and things on earth."

(Ephesians 1.10b) Gathering presupposes a scattering. All the divisions, strife, fightings, enmity, hatred, discrimination, segregation, etc., that we experience on earth is part of this scattering. At the end every one of these scattered segments must come to a stop and everyone needs to be gathered. St. Paul himself gives the rationale for this. Among those destined for adoption in Christ all these scattered elements are involved. Redemption through the blood of Christ is lavished upon all. Redemption in Christ means forgiveness of human trespasses according to the riches of God, the Father. *(Ephesians 1.5-8)*

The redemption brought about by Jesus is unconditional and universal, extending to every human being on earth. It is the work of us the believers of this time and this age to carry the message of Jesus to the people of this generation. We are not given by Jesus an option not to do it. It is a must do.