

Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time July 11, 2021

Our Lady of Perpetual Help

First Reading: AM 7:12-15

Amaziah, priest of Bethel, said to Amos, “Off with you, visionary, flee to the land of Judah! There earn your bread by prophesying, but never again prophesy in Bethel; for it is the king’s sanctuary and a royal temple.” Amos answered Amaziah, “I was no prophet, nor have I belonged to a company of prophets; I was a shepherd and a dresser of sycamores. The LORD took me from following the flock, and said to me, Go, prophesy to my people Israel.”

Responsorial Psalm: PS 85:9-10, 11-12, 13-14

R. (8) Lord, let us see your kindness, and grant us your salvation.

I will hear what God proclaims; the LORD—for he proclaims peace. Near indeed is his salvation to those who fear him, glory dwelling in our land.

R. Lord, let us see your kindness, and grant us your salvation.

Kindness and truth shall meet; justice and peace shall kiss. Truth shall spring out of the earth, and justice shall look down from heaven.

R. Lord, let us see your kindness, and grant us your salvation.

The LORD himself will give his benefits; our land shall yield its increase. Justice shall walk before him, and prepare the way of his steps.

R. Lord, let us see your kindness, and grant us your salvation.

Second Reading: EPH 1:3-14

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavens, as he chose us in him, before the foundation of the world, to be holy and without blemish before him. In love he destined us for adoption to himself through Jesus Christ, in accord with the favor of his will, for the praise of the glory of his grace that he granted us in the beloved. In him we have redemption by his blood, the forgiveness of

transgressions, in accord with the riches of his grace that he lavished upon us. In all wisdom and insight, he has made known to us the mystery of his will in accord with his favor that he set forth in him as a plan for the fullness of times, to sum up all things in Christ, in heaven and on earth.

In him we were also chosen, destined in accord with the purpose of the One who accomplishes all things according to the intention of his will, so that we might exist for the praise of his glory, we who first hoped in Christ. In him you also, who have heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and have believed in him, were sealed with the promised holy Spirit, which is the first installment of our inheritance toward redemption as God’s possession, to the praise of his glory.

Gospel: MK 6:7-13

Jesus summoned the Twelve and began to send them out two by two and gave them authority over unclean spirits. He instructed them to take nothing for the journey but a walking stick—no food, no sack, no money in their belts. They were, however, to wear sandals but not a second tunic. He said to them, “Wherever you enter a house, stay there until you leave. Whatever place does not welcome you or listen to you, leave there and shake the dust off your feet in testimony against them.” So they went off and preached repentance. The Twelve drove out many demons, and they anointed with oil many who were sick and cured them.

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INVITATION TO PRAY

Pause for a few moments of silence and enter more deeply into the presence of God...

Proclaim the Scriptures out loud

As you listen to the scriptures be attentive to a word, a phrase, a question, an image, or a feeling that emerges. Reflect on this quietly or share it aloud.

INVITATION TO REFLECT

Imagine how you and the world would respond if there existed a medical team who had discovered a sure cure for cancer many years ago, but for reasons known only to them, had refused to tell the world about their discovery. Most of us have one or more beloved family members, or dear friends, who have suffered terribly from the ravages of cancer, before finally succumbing to this devastating disease. We would at best be flabbergasted that people dedicated to healing could be so callous as to withhold this information. More than likely we would justifiably be outraged, bitter, and vengeful. How in the world could one human treat another so dispassionately, not caring enough about their suffering and death to share the means of a cure which they had discovered?

Yet, spiritually, the same disservice to mankind is being perpetrated by many Christians. The world is suffering a more serious eternal fate due to the cancer of sin and unbelief. Lives are being destroyed with an equal or greater devastation because the cancer of sin and unbelief destroys not only the life of the non-believer, but also the lives of loved ones and friends associated with the non-believer. There is a cure! The love of God in Jesus not only cures the diseased non-believer but also provides rehabilitating help to remove the affects of the disease. As Catholic Christians we know and have experienced the life saving cure, yet we are often guilty by our silence of withholding similar life saving help.

Our discovery of life in Jesus is a wonderful, life saving, discovery for humankind. It has not only secured our eternal destiny but also enhanced our earthly existence. Rather than keeping silent we should be joyfully contagious messengers of God's grace to those around us. Sometimes our witness can simply be the witness of a pleasant, smiling, affirming life that engages the people around us by showing interest and concern. However, there are times when we should also be committed to sitting down face to face with someone and telling them the story of God's love which was expressed through Christ's death on their behalf. The Good News does not need to dwell on their sinfulness, for most people are fully aware of their shortcomings and estrangement from God. Instead we need to dwell on the saving work of Jesus, and the love of God that initiated salvation. In this week's second reading we see a brilliant synopsis of all that salvation entails. If we could simply help people to understand these wonderful truths, we would be introducing them to the "Cure" of a lifetime. We must awaken to the gift held within us, and to the opportunities to share that gift with others who are awaiting without.

"Do not be afraid to go out on the streets and into public places," Pope John Paul II urged, "like the first apostles who preached Christ and the good news of salvation in the squares of cities, towns and villages. This is no time to be ashamed of the Gospel. ... It is the time to preach it from the rooftops."* Like Amos the Lord can enable us to become "go-ers," people who go forth into their daily activities with the message of hope. However, we need not view ourselves as prophets going to a hostile audience, but simply as friends willingly going to introduce a friend (Jesus) to our friends.

* Witness To Hope: The Biography To Pope John Paul II, by George Weigel, (683).

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INVITATION TO GROUP SHARING

First Reading

1. Explain the difference between being a prophet and being a witness.

Second Reading

2. What is man's responsibility in salvation according to this passage?
3. What are the purposes of salvation revealed in this passage?

Gospel Reading

4. What principles for sharing the Good News do you discover from this passage?
5. What are some advantages of two people partnering in the process of sharing the Good News?
6. Why do you think that Jesus didn't send more *stuff* with them? How is that applicable to us?

INVITATION TO ACT

Determine a specific action (individual or group) that flows from your sharing. When choosing an individual action, determine what you will do and share it with the group. When choosing a group action, determine who will take responsibility for different aspects of the action. These should be your primary considerations.

CLOSING INVITATION TO PRAY

Give thanks to God (aloud or silently) for new insights, for desires awakened, for directions clarified, for the gift of one another's openness and sensitivity. Conclude with a final prayer.