

***SHAKING OFF THE DUST OF FAILURE***

**15<sup>TH</sup> Sunday OT**

**Year B**

**Amos 7:12-15; Ps 85:9-14; Eph 1:3-14; Mk 6:7-13**

**Dcn. Tom McConnell**

**A farmer hired a carpenter to help him restore his old farmhouse. The carpenter's first day on the job was a rough one. He arrived late to work because he had a flat tire, halfway through the work his electric saw broke, and at the end of the workday his old pickup truck refused to start. The farmer had to drive him home. Arriving home, the carpenter invited the farmer in to meet his family. As they walked toward the front door, the carpenter paused briefly at a small tree, touching the tips of the branches with both hands. He then opened the door and was beaming with smiles as he hugged his two small children and gave his wife a kiss.**

**Afterward, the carpenter walked the farmer to his car. As they passed that tree, the farmer's curiosity got the better of him. So, he decided to ask the carpenter about what he had seen him do earlier. *"Oh, that's my trouble tree", the carpenter replied. "I know I can't help having troubles on the job, but one thing for sure, troubles don't belong in the house with my wife and the children. So, I just hang them up on the tree every night when I come home. Then in the morning I pick them up again. Funny thing, though, is when I come out in the morning to pick***

*them up, there aren't nearly as many as I remember hanging up the night before.”*

**Having a trouble tree is the carpenter’s way of dealing with daily failures and problems, which can sometimes seem overwhelming. Because problems and failures are a part of life, we all need a trouble tree. That’s why Jesus, as he sends out the apostles to evangelize the world around them, thought it wise to provide them with a trouble tree. He says in today’s Gospel: *“If any place will not welcome you and they refuse to hear you, as you leave, shake off the dust that is on your feet as a testimony against them”* (Mark 6:11). In other words, if you try to teach the people in a particular village and you meet with failure, don’t let the failure get you down. Shake off the dust from that village, go to a new village, and start again on a fresh page. Shaking off the dust from their feet is their own way of hanging their problems on the trouble tree.**

**Like the apostles and the wise carpenter, we also need a trouble tree. Why? Well, because to start with, problems and failures are inevitable in the life of anyone who seeks to make a difference. But sometimes we dwell too long on past failures and allow them to rob our**

**lives of enthusiasm and joy. Sometimes we allow the problems and pressures of the workplace to ruin the peace of our family life.**

**In order not to let this happen, we need a trouble tree where we can hang and forget our failures, at least for a while. We need, at the end of the day, to be able to shake off the dust of worry and failure from our feet, knowing that tomorrow will bring with it a brand-new day with brand-new opportunities. It's like baseball. Even if you lost 10-0 in yesterday's game, today it is a whole new ball game and the scoreboard starts at 0-0.**

**What happens when we don't have a trouble tree? If we have no way of shaking off the dust of yesterday's failure from our feet, the dust clings to us and accumulates and weighs us down. The result is depression and despair. We give up. We quit, instead of going on to a new village, to a new project, to a new challenge. But Jesus doesn't want us to be quitters. He wants us to be women and men, girls and boys, who begin again anew each new day. New day, new challenges, new opportunities!**

**As the people of God, today is a good day to thank God for making provision for our failures, our weaknesses, our imperfections. Faithful men and women, boys and girls of God are not those who are perfect and make no mistakes, they are those who realize their mistakes, acknowledge them, deal with them, put them behind and move on, beginning again each dawning day with a new hope.**

**God in his mercy has provided us with a trouble tree...His only begotten son, Jesus Christ. Christ Himself hung up our sins in his body to the tree of life, the Holy Cross (1 Peter 2:24). Let Christ on the cross be your trouble tree. Through the sacraments, especially reconciliation and the Eucharist, we have access to this tree of life. We can also do it through daily prayer, when we do as St Peter tells us in 5<sup>th</sup> chapter of his 1<sup>st</sup> epistle, *“Cast all your worries on him, because he cares for you”* (1 Peter 5:7). View Jesus on the tree of sacrifice...the cross...as your guaranteed trouble tree!**

**God bless you all....**