

## 15th Sunday (B)

Our readings today reveal to us, among other things, that while God has His plan for our lives, we can sometimes fall short of that. We limit our own view of ourselves. We limit even God's grace in our lives. We don't think we're worth it, or there's fear. Whatever the reason we do these things, and so we just remain stuck where we are. It is very contradictory. On one hand we want to be changed and transformed, but on the other we don't want to do anything about it.

In the first reading we heard the call of the prophet Amos. God wanted him to become a prophet. We are told Amos was a shepherd and a farmer. Amos had his own plan for his life, while God had another.

The Gospel shows Jesus sending out the Twelve Apostles, two by two. I'm sure there was some resistance or push back when Jesus told them His plan. Just imaging what conversation might have looked like:

Jesus: So I want ya'll to go out on your own in pairs, without me, and preach.

Apostles: Okay... What are we talking about?

Jesus: You will be preaching repentance.

Apostles: That's cool. We heard John the Baptist preach this. You preach this often. We can do that. Where are we staying?

Jesus: You will rely totally on the charity and hospitality of others. You will have nothing but a walking stick. No food or money.

Apostles: Just a walking stick?

Jesus: Just a walking stick.

Apostles: Is there anything else that you want us to do?

Jesus: Oh yeah, ya'll will be curing the sick and performing exorcisms too.

Apostles: Are you sure you don't want to come with us? We can't do all of this without you.

Jesus was very sure of His plan for the Twelve. He knew they could do it, as they would do even greater things after Pentecost. But I'm sure that they were unsure they could do what Jesus was asking of them.

We, too, can question what God asks of us. We think we aren't worthy, or don't have the proper skills, or are not the best person for the job. God doesn't ask anything of us that we cannot do. We might not think we can do it. There can be a sense in which we cannot do it on our own, relying totally on ourselves. But God doesn't ask us to do it without Him. He asks us to do it with Him. He is always with us, ever present to us. He provides us with His grace, which makes the seemingly impossible possible. Could the Twelves drive out demons on their own power? No. Jesus gave them the power and authority over demons, so they did it in the name of Jesus.

What makes us worthy of what God asks of us is Jesus. St. Paul talks about his in the second reading, where he says, "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." We have been redeemed by the blood of Jesus and have received forgiveness of sins. His greatness and richness is given to us, which we call grace. His grace is His very life. The life of Trinity is His grace. The divine and uncreated life that is shared between the Three Persons is given to us. That life of God in our souls is what makes us worthy.

Maybe it's our fallen nature, but we tend to have a negative view of ourselves. For instance, one of the few positive things about Facebook is the

affirmation and complements that I see among friends, building each other up. This is a good thing. We can affirm our friend, yet do not have the same view of ourselves. We can tend to look negatively upon ourselves.

In spiritual terms, we often see our faults, our shame, and our sin. Even if we've brought it to Confession and have been forgiven, all we see is our blemishes and bruises. But this is not who we are. We are not the summation of our sin. We are not a pile of mistakes. St. John Paul II said the following at the 2002 World Youth Day in Toronto, "We are not the sum of our weaknesses and failures; we are the sum of the Father's love for us and our real capacity to become the image of his Son."

We have been given life because of the Father's love for us. We are His sons and daughters. We are loved by Him, and that's all that matters. And like St. John Paul II said, we have the capacity to become an image of Jesus Christ to the world. The Twelve brought His image to others. We, too, are given that same mission because just like the Twelve, we are made worthy of it by Jesus Christ.

May we not be afraid of what Jesus asks of us. He is by our side and will never abandon us. May we actualize the grace God gives us, participate with it, and become the sons and daughters of the Father that we were meant to be. St. Catherine of Siena says, "Be who God created you to be and you will set the world on fire."