

15th Sunday in Ordinary Time – Fr. Dave

(Amos 7: 12 – 15; Ephesians 1: 3 – 14; Mark 6: 7 – 13)

Last week we began a series of readings that focus on discipleship: more specifically our call to be both disciple as well as prophet. This week we look at a similar theme, but it is more focused as we are reminded to not allow ourselves to become distracted from what that call to us entails.

A story is told of a young boy, born blind, who had just had a medical procedure performed to try and correct the problem. The new procedure offered the possibility of sight for this young boy who had never seen the light of day. As the parents waited for the doctor to remove the patches which had covered his eyes since surgery, they were uncertain about what his response would be. Blinking his eyes, adjusting to the sights and colors around him, the boy suddenly began to take it all in. Full of excitement, he said to his parents, "Why didn't you tell me it was so beautiful?" This is the work of evangelism. It is the business of helping persons open their eyes and see the world as they have never seen it before. It is not the pressuring of people to come to Church. Such pressure is in the long run nonproductive and basically unchristian. Rather, evangelism is the introduction of persons to a new way of living, a new way of relating, a new way of perceiving the meaning of existence.

Amos, the Old Testament prophet, attempted to tell the people of God and their need to reform their lives so as to enjoy the beauty that God gives to us each day. Amaziah, the priest of Bethel, tried to get Amos to leave – seeing Amos as a “problem.” Amos makes it clear that he is preaching because he has to, he is not doing it for the good of his health. The Lord demands it of him that he should preach the real word / the Truth to the people of God.

Paul, in his letter to the Church in Ephesus explains the blessings that we have received through our Baptism and the responsibility we all have to become missionaries. Then Paul reveals the Divine secret that it had been God’s eternal plan to extend salvation to all people.

Mark, in his Gospel, tells the story of Jesus commissioning the twelve Apostles to preach the “Good News” of repentance, forgiveness of sins, liberation and salvation through Jesus. Interestingly, so as not to become distracted but to remain focused on God / so as not to put their dependence on any material goods, Jesus further instructs them to go with the bare essentials – only the clothes on their back and a walking stick: no food, no sack, no money in their belts. They were to put their total trust in God taking care of them on the journey and providing for their needs through the people they would be preaching to.

What distracts us from doing what God asks of us? You and I also have been commissioned by Jesus to spread the Good News. Commissioned – given a mission with Jesus. We are called to be witnessing disciples and evangelizing

apostles. As witnessing disciples, when people see us, when people hear us, they should see and hear Jesus (or at least a reflection of Him). We also have a liberating mission, – helping free people from the demons and abuses of nicotine, alcohol, drugs, gambling, pornography, promiscuous sex, hatred, jealousy, racial prejudices, among others. Just as Jesus gave the Apostles the grace to carry on the mission, so through our Baptism we have also been given the grace to carry on the mission.

Are we like the parents in the earlier story with the blind boy who never told him how beautiful everything was? Or, in the way that we live our lives, do we share how we’ve come to realize the beauty of God and how they, also, can experience that beauty. Let’s pray that we be willing to put our Faith into action in displaying His beauty & goodness.



A pastor joke: One Sunday at Mass as the priest was giving his homily, a little baby in the front row suddenly started crying loudly. The mother did her best to pacify the child, but nothing worked. So finally, she got up and started to walk down the aisle to take the baby into the cry room. The priest stopped his preaching, and very compassionately called out to the mother, “That’s OK! You don’t have to leave. The child isn’t disturbing me.” The young woman turned around and said, “No, pardon me Father, but you’re disturbing my child!”

Let us pray for the Conversion of the World
& for Peace

Scripture Reflection by Seminarian Dave

Sunday, July 11, 2021

“Be prepared”— the motto of the Boy Scouts of America— is a phrase I’ve heard and tried my best to adopt since my first involvement with Scouting at the age of 7. So, Jesus’ instructions to the Twelve in today’s Gospel seem almost preposterous: “take nothing for the journey but a walking stick— no food, no sack, no money...” (Mk 6:8) Even though the apostles were given authority over unclean spirits, they may have felt under-equipped for their important mission. Haven’t we all felt the same way?

Like Amos, who was a mere “shepherd and dresser of sycamores” (Am 7:14) when he received his call from the Lord, and like the apostles themselves, many of us come from humble backgrounds. Sometimes, we worry that we lack the wealth, the power, the intellect, or the willpower for the great task the Lord has given each of us: to be holy and without blemish before Him, as we hear in our second reading from Saint Paul to the Ephesians (1:4).

No matter if we’re called to marriage, religious life, the priesthood, or holy single life, we’re reminded in Scripture, and in the important writings of the Church, of our universal call to holiness: “all the faithful of Christ of whatever rank or status, are called to the fullness of the Christian life and to the perfection of charity” (Pope Paul VI, *Lumen Gentium* 40). That’s a tall order, and every one of us will stumble as we strive to be holy in the ways we relate to God, others, and ourselves.

Yet, we have hope that like the Twelve, who cast out many demons and brought healing to those they anointed, we can make an important impact despite feeling underprepared. After all, in Christ, we have been “blessed... with every spiritual blessing in the heavens” (Eph 1:3). The Holy Spirit grants us gifts to enable us to collaborate in the

salvation of others and in the growth of the Body of Christ, the Church (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2003). And Jesus doesn’t ask the apostles, or us, to do anything He has not already shown us how to do: preach the Gospel in word and deed, bring light to the margins of society, lead people into relationship with God, overcome evil with good. Some will reject us and our message, as Our Lord Himself was rejected, but we must “shake the dust off” our feet (Mk 6:11) and remain undeterred.

So, we find inspiration in Christ’s life, ministry, passion, death, and resurrection that we hear about in God’s Word; we draw strength from receiving Him — Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity — in the Most Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist.

Let’s move forward with awe and wonder, but also a sense of confidence, that God, who accomplishes all things according to the intention of His Will” (Eph 1:11), wants us to have a role in accomplishing his plan of salvation! The same God Who calls us will also equip us — preparing us with every grace we need. May God bless us all and prosper our work for Him!