

15th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Amos 7:12-15

Eph 1:3-14

Mk 6:7-13

During the Korean War, a small village in Korea came under heavy artillery fire. When the battle was over, the pastor of the parish sought the help of some American soldiers to restore a fallen statue of Christ to its pedestal. Since the statue had lost both its hands, the soldiers planned to replace it with two new hands. But the pastor told them not to replace the hands but write the words in front of the statue, “Friend, lend me your hands.”

Sending His apostles as His ambassadors to preach the good news and to heal the sick, Jesus in today’s gospel reminds us that he has no hands but ours to raise the fallen; no feet but ours to seek out the lost; no ears but ours to listen to the cry of the needy and the lonely, and no tongue but ours to speak words of comfort and encouragement to those in sorrow, pain, and failure. God has called and chosen each of us to speak the good news of Jesus. He has called us to bear witness to God’s love and mercy. By our baptism, God has called us to preach the salvation in Christ by our holy and blameless lives. In the second reading of today, St. Paul reminds us that God chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and without blemish and that, in Christ, we have forgiveness of sins and redemption. In our effort to spread the word of God, we might meet with opposition and discouragements. We have to face them like the apostles and the prophets of the Old Testament. In the first reading of today, we heard about God sending Amos to make His message known to the people of Bethel. But when he got there, Amaziah, the local religious authority, told him to shut up and get out. Amos defended his prophetic role with courage, saying that it was not his choice but God’s. God elevated him from a shepherd and tree dresser to a prophet. Amos, who was just an ordinary person, became an instrument of God’s truth.

There was nothing extraordinary about the disciples whom Jesus chose. Four of them were ordinary fishermen, one was a tax collector, and one was a political zealot. Don’t we have political zealots today—passionate Republicans, passionate Democrats, and those who passionately dislike all of them. As God sent Amos, Jesus sent his disciples to preach and to heal. As His followers, we too are called to witness and evangelize. The mission of Jesus is not restricted to the apostles. By the virtue of our Baptism, we are all called to participate in the same mission. In order to accomplish that mission, we need to have detachment from material

things and have our entire trust placed in God. That is the bottom line of all instructions that Jesus gave before He sent out His disciples two by two. We have to be focused on our mission to bring people to God. As a Church, we are focused on our mission. Are we bringing people in or driving them away? Our mission statement reminds us that as a church family, our mission is to live and share our faith. We are not only disciples but also apostles. The disciple is one who follows, but an apostle is one who is sent out. We are sent out to evangelize and invite others to come in. There are so many evil forces and addictions in our world. We need to help people liberate from these forces and restore the dignity as persons created in the image and likeness of God. He has brought us today around this altar to feed us with His very life. Strengthened by His life, let us renew our commitment to be His true apostles who spread God's kingdom.