

Reflection for 15th Sunday Ordinary Time Year B

Amos 6:7-13 Eph 1:3-14 Mark 6:7-13

Today's readings remind us of our Divine adoption as God's children and of our call to preach the Good News of Jesus by bearing witness to God's love, mercy, and salvation, as revealed through Jesus.

We need to understand the context of our first reading.

At the death of king Solomon, his kingdom was divided into two: the kingdom of Judah with Jerusalem as its capital. and the kingdom of Israel, built with a new capital - Samaria.

For most of the time, the two kingdoms of Judah and Israel were at loggerheads with each other. However, Jerusalem's temple continued to be the center of worship for the people of both kingdoms.

The king of Israel feared that if his people continued to go to Jerusalem to worship at the temple, the two kingdoms might eventually become one under the king of Judah and he would lose his throne. To prevent this, the king of Israel built a temple in his kingdom for his people to worship there. And he employed priests to administer at the temple at the king's expense.

During that period, the kingdom of Israel was passing through a period of prosperity but the poor were oppressed. The prophets and priest in the kingdom of Israel compromised their calling. They were corrupt and distracted by materialism. So, they no longer delivered justice or spoke God's truth.

God chose a poor farmer, Amos, from the kingdom of Judah, to prophesy in the kingdom of Israel.

Amos's task was difficult for two reasons: First, Amos was an outsider, he came from the kingdom of Judah. Second, at that time, the kingdom Israel was passing through a period of prosperity, therefore the leaders and the people were not willing to listen to a prophet who announce bad things to come about their kingdom.

This is why we see one of the priests, Amaziah, strongly oppose Amos and he said to Amos, 'Go away, get back to your land of Judah; earn your bread there, do your prophesying there. We want no more prophesying here.

Today's 1st reading reminds us that preaching repentance, social justice, God's truth and the Kingdom of God is dangerous business for Jesus' disciples. Like Prophet Amos, we must remember that we too may find resistance as we choose to be disciples of Jesus.

We, too, are called and sent to proclaim the Gospel just as God sent the prophet Amos to preach repentance to ancient Israel, and St. Paul to preach the Good News of salvation to the Gentiles and He reminds us of the reason He chose us: "To be holy, and spotless, and to live through love in God's presence. And Jesus' commissioning of the twelve apostles to preach the "Good News" of repentance— a change of heart and a change of action taking

people from a self-centred life to a God-centred life, forgiveness of sins, liberation, and salvation through Jesus.

The way to be effective proclaimers of the word of God is by our good examples. We must live the teachings of Christ. We ourselves should be the living Gospel in the world. As Pope Paul VI rightly noted, “modern people listen more willingly to witnesses than to preachers/teachers, and if they do listen to preachers/teachers, it is because they are witnesses”.

Let us proclaim the Gospel as Christians through our living, through our transparent Christian lives, radiating the love, mercy, forgiveness and spirit of humble selfless service.

We also have the liberating mission of helping to free people from the addiction of alcohol, drugs, gambling, hatred, jealousy, racial prejudice, and consumerism. We need the help of Jesus to liberate both ourselves and others from these things. helping them and ourselves to recover our freedom.

Christianity has always aimed not only at soul salvation but at whole salvation. From the beginning, Christianity has aimed to bring health to body and to soul.

Saint Mother Teresa once said: to do the work of Christ means to be faithful in little things, it means to do one’s task, no matter how humble it may be, not only thoroughly but joyfully.

It means to make oneself available, yet never to seek the limelight.

It means to carry one’s burden, without, as far as possible, becoming a burden on others.

In a word, it means to be at one’s post, helpful and faithful, loyal and constant.

May the Lord, make us an instrument for the building up of God’s Kingdom.

Fr Patrick