



Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

† Sunday 15th July 2018

In England & Wales:

Cycle of Prayer – Those who suffer persecution and denial of human rights

Keynote: Invited by God – to share the good news

Prophet Amos 7: 12-15

Amos, the simple shepherd herdsman is rejected with contempt by the sanctuary priests, and told to take himself and his teachings elsewhere! But Amos is something more than a simple farmer and keeper of sheep, for he has been called away from herding his flock and looking after his trees, he has been chosen by God to be spokesman – prophet. *'I was a shepherd, and looked after sycamores,'* says Amos *'but it was the Lord who took me from herding the flock, and the Lord who said, "Go, prophesy to my people Israel."*' We need to recognise, that God calls people away from their ordinary walks of life to be his witnesses and to be the bearers of the message of the gospel. Do not be too quick to reject the messenger or the truth of the message just because we don't like or respect the message bearer.

Responsorial Psalm 84 (85): 9-14 – A song of longing for the coming era of peace and justice

Letter of Paul to the Ephesians 1: 3-14

This text takes the form of a Jewish blessing of thanksgiving – a thanksgiving that recognises what God has given to us without our need to ask, let alone deserve such a gift. *'Blessed be God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with all the spiritual blessings of heaven in Christ.'* Each of us is uniquely chosen by God before the beginning of time, having *'heard the message of the truth and the good news of salvation... and stamped with the seal of the Holy Spirit'* each of us is invited to join in this mystery of praise and thanksgiving, which we have in Christ. We can reflect in wonder, *'such is the richness of the grace which God has showered on us in all wisdom and insight.'* Reflect on this because God has chosen each of us.

Gospel according to Mark 6: 7-13

Last week's Gospel related how his own neighbours rejected Jesus. Today Mark records that a new invitation is to be relayed, with Jesus sending his chosen messengers to carry the Good News to the world. Jesus chose his prophets to go out without even the help of a mobile phone, the world-wide Internet, radio, television or other forms of communication. *'He instructed them to take nothing for the journey except a staff – no bread, no haversack, no coppers for their purses.'* Thus Mark sets out the rules for the preachers and those who shall receive them, *'so they set off to preach repentance; and they cast out many devils, and anointed many sick people with oil and cured them.'* We too are invited, indeed called to proclaim the gospel by word and life – in our turn to be witnesses to the Gospel today. The best way to share the message is to do it personally, but you can use your mobile device!

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