

## REFLECTION FOR THE FIFTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Today's readings focus on the vocation and mission of those *sent* by God, those whom God chooses to be his disciples and to take his Word to the world. The readings affirm that it is God who chooses those he calls to be prophets of his Kingdom, messengers of his Good News. Thus, in the first reading, we speak of Amos, God's prophet, who goes to prophesy in Bethel, the royal sanctuary of the Kingdom of Israel. There, Amos boldly prophesies against the people's abandonment of God and the exploitation of the poor by the rich.

Amaziah is the priest at this shrine, and he advises Amos to keep quiet, to go and preach in the land of Judah instead, because he could be in mortal danger at Bethel. Amos' response makes it clear that the prophet is a free man, who does not act out of human interests (his own or those of others), but at God's command. It was not his initiative to be a prophet. God came to meet him, interrupted the normality of his life, and summoned him to the mission. Amos is a prophet because God burst into his life with an irresistible force, took hold of him and sent him to Israel. The prophet is therefore not concerned with the interests of the king or the interests of the priest Amaziah, or with perpetuating an unjust and oppressive social order. He has been summoned to be the voice of God and he is only interested in fulfilling the mission that God has entrusted to him. No matter who it hurts, that is what Amos will try to do. He cannot and will not remain silent.

The Gospel also insists on this idea: "*the Twelve*" are chosen by Jesus. It is the Lord who chooses his disciples, without regard to social or economic status or occupation. It is the Lord who knows who to call, who to choose, who to invite to be Apostles of His Gospel. He is the one who calls and sends. He chose twelve men and sent them out. They set off, sent by Jesus to the world.

This highlights a second aspect of the disciple's vocation: sharing the mission. Jesus sends the disciples out two by two because the mission is always communal, always of the Church and to be lived in the Church, with each other. The synodal journey that the Church is making under Pope Francis this year is a reminder of this. The mission is never mine; it is God's; and it is to be lived with others, shared with our brothers and sisters, in a community of life and mission.

Another important aspect is that the mission should be the center of the disciple's life, that nothing should distract them from this goal, which is why Jesus tells his disciples to go without everything, without saddlebags or money, with only a pair of sandals and a tunic. The apostle must be detached, put his trust only in the Lord,

live the mission in a spirit of poverty and trust in the Lord. The Apostles set out to preach the Good News of Christ, casting out demons and healing people oppressed by evil.

A reference to the second reading, taken from St. Paul's letter to the Ephesians, is a beautiful hymn of praise to God, "*the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us... before the world was made... to be holy and spotless... and his adopted children, through Jesus Christ*". God's plan is to "*establish everything together in Christ as head, everything in the heavens and everything on earth*". In Christ we have been made heirs of His glory. This is our goal: to one day reach eternity in God, who out of love sent his Son Jesus Christ to us, so that in him we might obtain the grace of eternal life.

Let us also today give thanks to God for his love, for having chosen us in Jesus Christ to be his children, and may he continue to call prophets, apostles, and messengers of his Gospel, so that his Good News may continue to be proclaimed to the world.