

**Theme: Jesus' Mission Is Also Our Mission**

**A**ll three readings of this 15<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time, especially the first and the Gospel readings, deal with the call and the sending of God's messengers with a direct and specific missions to carry out to his people.

In the first reading, Amos was a shepherd and a dresser of sycamores from Judah, the Southern kingdom of Israel. God called him to bring his Word to the people in the Northern Kingdom of Israel. Amos was confronted and rejected by Amaziah, a priest of the sanctuary at Bethel in the Northern Kingdom. Amaziah depended on the King for his means of livelihood. He said only what the King and his subjects wanted to hear, not what God wanted him to communicate to them. Since Amos was a true messenger of God, he tells the king and his people the truth, what God has asked him to relate to them. He was met with rejection and persecution since he blamed them for the social injustices and evils prevailing in the Northern Kingdom. Despite what Amos went through, he was a faithful prophet/messenger of God.

By virtue of our baptism, as we all know, we also share in Jesus' prophetic ministry/role. It mean we must stand for what is right in accordance with the Word of God, even if we must die for it. Are we like Amos who stands for God and his mission or Amaziah who stands for the King and the injustices prevailing in his community? Remember, Amaziah knows the truth but was afraid to lose his job if he speaks the truth to the king.

In the Gospel, Jesus trained his twelve apostles and sent them out two by two with direct and specific missions, namely to heal the sick, cast out demons/evil spirits and to preach/teach the Word of God. Jesus gave them power and authority that they are to use not to lord over God's children but to serve them for the good of the Kingdom of God. Jesus instructed them to travel light, meaning they must put their total trust and faith in him for their livelihood and the success of their mission. They are to travel two by two so that they can support one another in their missionary journey. Just like Amos in the first reading and other prophets, they would be rejected by those who do not want to adhere to the Word of God. Those who would accept them, they are stay with them and continue their mission. But those who do not accept them move on to where they would be welcomed.

Like Amos and these twelve apostles, through our baptism, Jesus has also called us and sent us to the world. All baptized Catholics are mandated by Christ to go out and share his Good News by our deeds and words. This is what St. Paul is reminding us in the second reading. Through Jesus, we are blessed with spiritual gifts that we are supposed to use in building the kingdom of God here on earth. Personally, I am truly blessed to have each and every one of you in our parish and the diocese. Just imagine, without you and your talents/ gifts, how could the parish carry Jesus' mission in our community and the diocese? Looking at our Catholic Sharing Appeal (CSA) this week, we raised \$15,135 of \$12,900 goals by 38 donors in the parish. Thanks for your donations to the CSA. I am also very grateful to the parish staff, parish pastoral council, finance council, choir, environmental committee, card ministry, coffee, donut teams, and all the organizations in our parish. Big thanks also to the parishioners helping at Parish House, Pregnancy Center, Prison, etc. I honestly believe no single parishioner can do it all. That is unhealthy to try to do it all by yourself! Together, we can do it all and do it well in Jesus' name.

Let us continue to ask the good Lord who has called each one of us to this parish and diocese, to give us the grace and blessing so that we would continue to be faithful to what he called us to do for him and his Church. May Mother Mary and her beloved husband, St. Joseph continue to intercede for us as we respond to their Son Jesus' call, and his mission. God's blessings to you all!