

Fr. Martin's Reflection – 07/11/21 Bulletin

“Go, prophesy to my people”

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

The theme from our first reading and the gospel is clearly a theme of discipleship, being sent by God to witness to God's people. Now, before we start sending the 'other person' because God would not be sending me, let us take a look at our first reading.

We are introduced to Amos, a layman, a farmer turned prophet. He came from a small village in the hill country of Judah. He was a shepherd and a dresser of sycamore trees. Amos was a simple man, but he was no simpleton with straw coming out of his ears. He was a critical observer of the social and religious scene, a telling communicator who knew how to proclaim his message with biting clarity.

Amos was sent to the northern kingdom, Israel, which had reached the summit of its material power and prosperity. The land was full of plenty, the cities were elegantly built, the palaces were strongly defended, and the rich had their summer and winter villas adorned in costly ivory. At the same time there was widespread corruption and immorality. The poor were afflicted, exploited, even sold into slavery. There was an absence of justice and pity in the land: the judges were corrupt; the innocents were betrayed.

In the midst of all this luxury and misery, religion flourished. People thronged to the shrines at festival time to practise elaborate ritual. Amos regarded the religious services as a counterfeit enterprise abhorrent to God. So he spoke the word of God:

I hate and despise your feasts;
I take no pleasure in your solemn festivals ...
I reject your oblations,
and refuse to look at your sacrifices of fattened cattle.
Let me have no more of the din of your chanting ...
But let justice flow like water,
and integrity like an unfailing stream. (Amos 5:21-24)

Amos states simply that he did not become a prophet by self-appointment or by royal appointment; he was conscripted by God for the declared purpose of announcing God's message.

In today's Gospel Jesus summons the twelve apostles and sends them out on a missionary tour. Like the prophet Amos, the apostles have to carry the word of God as a challenge to others. Both the prophets and the apostles must rely on the authority and the power given to them.

This process continues every day in the life of the Church and the world. Each of us are called by God to carry God's message wherever we find ourselves. As difficult and challenging as it is, like Amos and the apostles, God is with us.

“Go, prophesy to my people”

May God's great spirit be with you as you carry God's message to all you meet this coming week.

Fr. Martin