

## **Homily of Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B, 2024**

### **Amos 7:12-15; Psalm 85:9-14; Ephesians 1:3-14; Mark 6:7-13**

In the first reading, Prophet Amos replied to Amaziah, priest of Bethel, "I am not a prophet, nor do I belong to a company of prophets. I am a herdsman and a dresser of sycamores, but the Lord took me from following the flock, and the Lord said to me, 'Go, prophesy to my people Israel'" (Amos 7:14-15).

In the second reading, St. Paul writes, "In him we were chosen, destined in accord with the purpose of the One who accomplishes all things according to the intention of his will" (Ephesians 1:11).

In the gospel, Jesus sent the apostles "out two by two and gave them authority over unclean spirits." Who were they before Jesus called them? Simon Peter, James and John, sons of Zebedee, and Bartholomew were fishermen; Philip was a disciple of John the Baptist; Matthew was a tax collector; Simon the Canaanite is said to belong to the Zealots' political movement. The background of Thaddaeus, James the Less, and Judas Iscariot is inconspicuous. The apostles were nobodies when they were called.

Prophet Amos, St. Paul, and the apostles, none was ready-made at the time of his call. It was a complete switch and change for each person. Some people are called as instruments of the Good News in the priesthood and in the religious life. Some people are called in various other ministries in the Church. Some people are, also, called to become benefactors and benefactresses of the Church's missions, parishes, ministries, seminaries, institutions, and programs.

Our world is infested by unclean spirits and diseases. God wants to call men and women whom he will give the authority to drive out demons and to cure the sick. God wants to call generous men and women who will be selfless and self-giving. God wants to call obedient men and women who will be ready and willing to follow the instructions we read in today's gospel: "Take nothing for the journey but a walking stick, no food, no sack, no money in their belts. They were, however, to wear sandals but not a second tunic. ... 'Wherever you enter a house, stay there until you leave from there. Whatever place does not welcome you or listen to you, leave there and shake the dust off your feet in testimony against them'" (Mark 6:8-11).

God wants to call men and women who will be able to give up their own plans and embrace God's plan. God wants to call men and women who will be able to withstand trials and temptations, oppositions, and persecutions as Amos did against Amaziah, the priest of Bethel, and as St. Paul and the apostles who refused to be silenced.

No one is exempt from God's call. Everyone's profession or endeavor is his or her call to prophesy, to drive out demons, and to cure the sick. God, also, gives each person the authority he gave to Amos, St. Paul, and the apostles. St. Paul says in the second reading, "God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ ... has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavens, as he chose us in him ..." (Ephesians 1:3-4). This

means that everyone is blessed with the spiritual blessing, through his or her vocation or profession, or endeavor to be an instrument of prophesy, evangelization, deliverance, and healing.

Let us pray and cast out spirits of reluctancy and discouragement with these words of the Scripture: "Then one of the seraphim flew to me, holding an ember which he had taken with tongs from the altar. He touched my mouth with it. 'See,' he said, 'now that this has touched your lips, your wickedness is removed, your sin purged.' Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, 'Whom shall I send? Who will go for us?' 'Here I am,' I said; 'send me!'" (Isaiah 6:7-8). Amen.

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