

Fifteenth Sunday Ordinary Time - B - 2021
Amos 7.12-15///Ephesians 1.3-14///Mark 6.7-13

→one of the unique qualities and characteristics of this time of year in the church is that most weeks during the summer our gospel readings are ordered one episode after another...and today is not different.

→it follows the sequence of readings we have been hearing over the past few weeks...

→today after hearing about Jesus being rejected last week by his hometown...he makes his way to the other villages teaching the Good News...

→today he calls the twelve disciples together and begins sending them out two by two, giving them authority over the unclean spirits....

He tells them...to take nothing for their journey except a staff, no bread, no money in their belts; but to wear sandals and not to put on two tunics

--in what appears to be a replay of his own rejection in Nazareth...he tells the disciples further... "wherever you enter a house, stay there until you leave the place. And if any place doesn't welcome you and refuses to hear you...as you leave, shake the dust from your feet as testimony against them.

→basically...Jesus prepares the Apostles for surviving their mission of spreading the news about him with some simple straightforward instructions: travel light....be gracious recipients of hospitality...and...refuse to let others define who you are.

--Jesus tells them to announce and give witness that the promised day of salvation is at hand...and they are to do this by curing the sick /// raising the dead /// and healing those broken in body and spirit

→they were to give freely and generously of themselves to others

→[and] they were to preach that the Kingdom of God was at hand.....and for those who were unwilling to welcome them and their message.....

→they were to leave and shake the dust of that town from their feet.

→and so, today's readings offer us several important lessons....because side by side, like triplets standing in a row, they confront us with the meaning and mission of discipleship

---the readings deal with the call of discipleship in our world....and they echo the same theme that we have been hearing about for past few weeks.....our call and duty to be true disciples of Christ in our world today

→however what I find MOST INTERESTING is exactly who Jesus entrusts this mission....this discipleship too

→he basically chose 12 ordinary people to do some extraordinary work-----and likewise he has chosen you and me to do the same.

→all of us have been called to be prophets, to be disciples of the gospel

→and we see, J. was not very interested in powerful, OR exceptionally brilliant, or well-schooled people to spread God's word

PAUSE

→I have always been amazed at just who J. asked to be his disciples....

→he asked Andrew---Andrew lacked a sense of adventure... a sense of risk----[recall] Andrew was the one who asked "what can anyone do w/ 5 loaves and 2 fishes

→ Jesus chose Phillip---Phillip can be characterized as a patriot, a fighter, the flag-waver...he is the one who insisted that Jesus act like a majestic king to get his message across to the people

→ Like Phillip, Jesus chose Simon, --Simon is a fighter...he thought redemption could be gained by fighting everyone who was against them

→ then there was Nathaniel...he lacked openness, sincerity, and trust...he had the nerve to ask Jesus..."can anything good come out of Nazareth?"

→ Thomas was a doubter.....we all know his story

→ Judas was a crook

→ Matthew was a tax collector

→ then there was Thaddeus...we don't hear too much about him because Thaddeus was a realist, he once said to Jesus "why not just reveal yourself as the Messiah to the world, show them who's boss...and let's get this all over with"

→ James was a chauvinist.....for him...Christianity and redemption was only for the Jewish people and nobody else

→ James/John, were ambitious and pushy...they were most concerned about themselves, wanting to know who would be sitting on the right and on the left

→ and finally there is Peter, who was the leader of this group...he denied Jesus in his time of need and more often than not he failed to understand anything that was going on or what J. was saying or doing

→[And so there you have it]....→this is the crew that J. assembled to carry on his mission

→and now Jesus is calling you and me, to be the 13th disciple [if you will]

→Jesus took 12 ordinary, not-to-intelligent people, and sent them out to do his work....to bring his message of salvation to the world

→and...like those 12 ordinary people we have too been chosen to do the same

PAUSE

→we are the disciples of today, the comfortable//fearful//weak//timid//the ordinary factory worker///executive///sales person///student///teacher///farmer and gardener

→and as disciples of Jesus, we have been called to walk with the hungry, help the poor, care for the wounded, watch out for those not heard and stand up for those treated unjustly

PAUSE

→this is the call...the invitation...the challenge that all of us received at our baptism

→to embrace the message of Christ and live the gospel throughout our lives.

→we are very ordinary people, no better or worse than those chosen by Jesus long ago

→ordinary people who have been called forth, w/God's help to do some extraordinary things.

.....This is now **our** mission....each and everyone of us....a mission that is anything but impossible

→if we only **but** follow the same instructions given by Jesus this day

Travel light....

be gracious with hospitality...

and refuse to let others define who you are...

