

Homily

Mark 6: 7-13

- This Sunday's scripture readings remind us God has chosen us to be His presence and His voice in the world.
- In our first reading from the Book of the Prophet Amos we see Amos being rejected and sent away by those not wanting to hear the teachings and voice of God. They accuse Amos of being a false prophet whose goal is to live off the contributions of the people. But Amos' response gives us an insight into who God chooses to represent Him in the world.
- Amos responds that he is no great prophet; he is a simple shepherd and gardener who God called to be God's presence and voice in the world. God chooses ordinary people, like you and me!
- In our second reading Saint Paul reinforces this message when He tells us God has chosen us and equipped us ("with every spiritual blessing") to be His presence and voice in the world. Paul tells us we do this by "living out" the teachings and examples of Jesus Christ.
- Paul also encourages us by reminding us we are God's possessions. Isn't that a wonderful reminder: We belong to God. Never think you are unimportant or not valuable. You are a child of God. Almighty God, who created the universe, loves and cares and cherishes *you*. Paul further reminds us the love and blessings God gives to us in this world is only the first installment of the love and blessings God has planned for us in eternity!
- And our Gospel reading this week gives us some practical advice on how to be God's presence, His love and His voice in our world today. This advice comes directly from Jesus' as He is about to send His first followers into the world. Notice a few important things about Jesus' directives:
- Jesus sent them two by two, to carry out this important work. The message: we need each other! We need to remind each other, encourage each other and assist each other in our call to be God's presence and love in the world.
- Next, Jesus tells them: Live simple. Don't cling to material things. Don't let things "crowd" your life so that there is no room to hear the voice of God, no time to do God's work. Jesus reminds them to trust that God will provide what you need.

- Then Jesus cautions them: Don't be discouraged. Don't give up if people reject or criticize or ignore you. (How often do we feel we don't see the results of our attempts to bring God's love to others – sometimes we are called to just plant the seed and leave the rest to God!). Jesus tells them at times you may just have to move on. Keep being God's presence, God's love – wherever you find yourself.
- Finally, Jesus reminds them: You have been given power. You have the power to drive out demons. You have the power to bring healing and cures. Those first disciples did just that. We read in the Gospel: “*So they went off and preached repentance. The Twelve drove out many demons, and they anointed with oil many who were sick and cured them.*”
- As followers of Jesus we have been given that same power and are expected to use it in the same way.
- We are called to be the loving presence of God to those we meet.
- We are empowered to drive out demons. Demons of fear, anxiety, and doubt that plague others. Drive out demons that tell others they are worthless, unloved, and unimportant – no one cares. We drive out these demons by replacing them with words of love and encouragement. By being *present* for others.
- We are empowered to be healers. Healing can come in many forms: physical healing, as well as emotional healing. Sometimes just helping someone to look at or think about something differently can be a tremendous healing. Providing a needed car ride to a doctor's appointment, doing the grocery shopping for someone, making a call or visit to check in or to just listen – all ways to heal with simple acts of love. Each one of us is equipped and empowered in unique ways to bring this healing into the world.
- There is a world full of people desperate to hear the voice, feel the love and know presence of almighty God. As simple people, like Amos, as followers of Jesus like those first followers, we are each called to satisfy those needs.
- God bless you.