

FIFTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

CYCLE B

Amos 7: 12-15
Ephesians 1: 3-14
Mark 6: 7-13

OPENING PRAYER

(A candle is lit and members pause to acknowledge their presence before God. After a few minutes of quiet, the community prays as follows.)

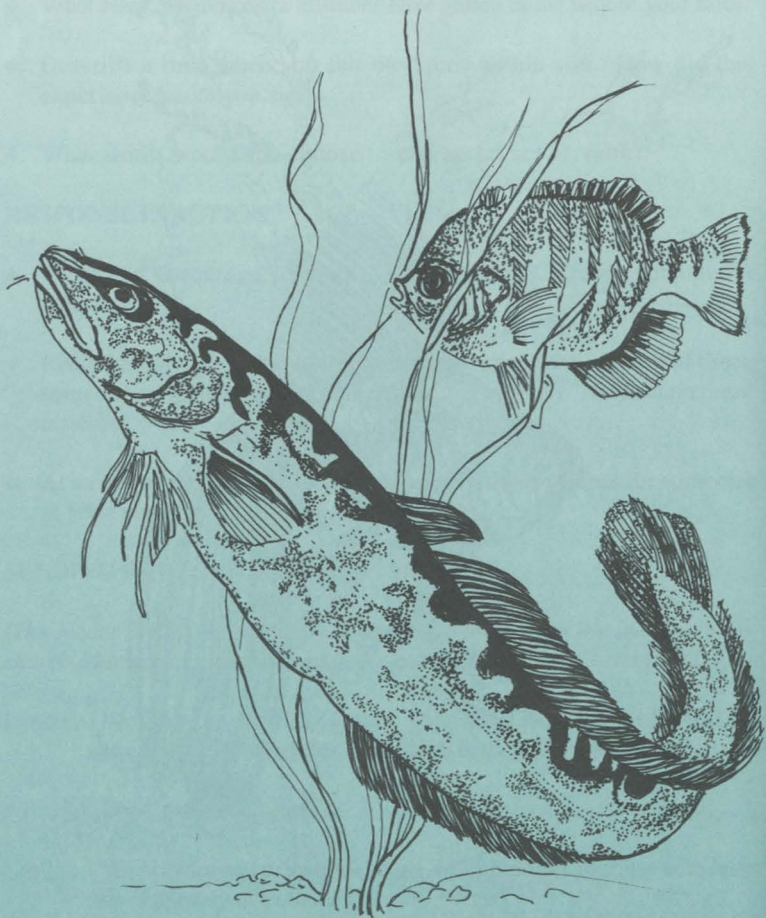
All: Hallelujah!
Give thanks to the LORD, who is good,
whose love endures forever.
Who can tell the mighty deeds of the LORD,
proclaim in full God's praise?
Happy those who do what is right,
whose deeds are always just.
Remember me, LORD, as you favor your people;
come to me with your saving help,
That I may see the prosperity of your chosen,
rejoice in the joy of your people,
and glory with your heritage.

Psalm 106: 1-5

COMMENTARY

In her book, **When the Heart Waits**, Sue Monk Kidd remarks that in the face of opposition, if you are doing the right thing and have God on your side, you are always on the winning side¹. In today's readings, God is definitely on the side of those who are preaching repentance. Even though Amos is expelled from the royal temple because he was not preaching what the king's court wanted to hear, he is not deterred from his mission. And even though the

¹Kidd, Sue Monk. **When the Heart Waits**. San Francisco, HarperCollins, 1990.



pairs of apostles are warned they will probably experience inhospitality, a big *no-no* in those times, they are given definite instructions and power to keep them going; they would cast out demons and cure the sick.

It is interesting that Amos seems so unprepared for his call to prophesy to the Israelites. A shepherd and dresser of sycamores by occupation, he gets a personal summons from God to admonish the people for their failure to live up to their covenant with God.

The apostles, not fully aware of who Jesus really is, are still summoned to go two-by-two with hardly any provisions and seemingly inadequate preparations, to preach the message of repentance.

Amos and the apostles did not wait around. Propelled by the power of their mission, they obeyed the divine call. God was with them and gave them strength and perseverance.

As God chose Amos as prophet, and Jesus chose the Twelve as his evangelizing followers, so the Lord has chosen us to proclaim his kingdom. Although we may be underqualified or seemingly unprepared, we have God on our side. Paul tells us we have such lavish blessings from God in Jesus Christ! How much more prepared do we have to be? Best of all, each of us can always go *two-by-two* because, on our mission to spread the good news of God's love by our words, actions and example, Jesus is *always* our partner.

FAITH SHARING AND INTEGRATION

- ◆ Tell of a time the Lord made you more qualified than you thought you were to do his will.
- ◆ How comfortable would you be in describing yourself as a missionary?
- ◆ When have you been spiritually *hospitable* to someone?
- ◆ Share with the group some favorite ways you praise God for his glory, e.g. special prayers of praise, hymns, or devotions.

RESPONSE IN ACTION

- ◆ Pair up with a friend and attend a town council or state legislative meeting.

Choose some pressing issue of human need. Go prepared to speak and do so. Advocate for the common good.

- ◆ Ask someone to be your prayer partner. Work out a plan to spend some time each week in prayer – in person or on the phone.
- ◆ Set aside twenty minutes some day this week for reflection and prayer. For some minutes just sit quietly being in touch with yourself. Notice what is drawing your attention. Be conscious that God is present to you in the midst of it all. Pray for the grace to be ever more in touch with God's presence to you in daily life. Pray for the grace to speak up for gospel values in daily encounters even when you feel least prepared to do so.

SENDING FORTH AND CLOSING PRAYER

(Members pair off and take turns praying the prayer that follows.)

Salvator Mundi

- I: Jesus, Savior of the world,
come to us in your mercy;
we look to you to save and help us.
- II: By your cross and your life laid down,
you set your people free;
we look to you to save and help us.
- I: When they were ready to perish
you saved your disciples;
we look to you to come to our help.
- II: In the greatness of your mercy, loose us from
our chains;
forgive the sins of all your people.
- I: Make yourself known
as our savior and mighty deliverer;
save and help us that we may praise you.

II: Come now and dwell with us, Lord Christ Jesus;
hear our prayer and be with us always.

All: And when you come in your glory;
make us to be one with you
and to share the life of your kingdom.

Everyday Catholic Prayer: A Little Office Book, Angela Tilbey,
Ann Arbor: Servant Publications, 1999, p. 86.

