

## Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time – 14<sup>th</sup> July 2024

	<b>Gospel (Mark 6:7-13)</b>	<b>First Reading (Amos 7:12-15)</b>	<b>Second Reading (Ephesians 1:3-14)</b>
<b>Context</b>	Jesus fulfilled the prophecies of the Old Testament by coming to earth as the promised Messiah. Instead of coming as a conquering king, Jesus came to serve the people and give his life as a sacrifice for sin.	Amos prophesied to the people of Israel around 760-750 B.C. In doing so, Amos pronounced God’s judgement on Israel’s northern kingdom for its complacency, idolatry and oppression of the poor.	Paul wrote to the Ephesians and other believers to strengthen their Christian faith by explaining the nature and purpose of the church, the body of Christ.
<b>Key verses</b>	<i>“Jesus summoned the Twelve and began to send them out in pairs...”</i>	<i>“Go, prophesy to my people Israel.”</i>	<i>“Before the world was made, he chose us...”</i>
<b>Key themes/ messages</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sending out the apostles in pairs, instead of sending them out individually, had distinct advantages. For example, this approach would ensure the apostles could encourage each other and comfort one another at times of rejection.</li> <li>• Jesus knew that God would look after the apostles during their ministry and provide for their needs.</li> <li>• Jesus also knew that the apostles would face challenges whilst evangelising, as many people would reject God’s message.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The priest of Bethel, Amaziah, rejected Amos. Note the similarity to Mark’s gospel when Jesus predicted that his apostles would face challenges in spreading God’s message to the people.</li> <li>• Apart from Amos, the other prophets of the Old Testament were often rejected by the people.</li> <li>• Although Amos had not special preparation, upbringing or education, he faithfully obeyed God’s call to prophesy to the people of Israel.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• God chose us to be his children from the beginning. His love for us is endless.</li> <li>• Paul explains that we have received spiritual blessings in Christ. This means, for example, that we have been chosen for salvation, adopted as God’s children, blessed with the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and given the ability to do God’s work.</li> <li>• Our salvation depends on God, not because we deserve it. It is gained by the grace of God from Christ’s death and resurrection.</li> </ul>
<b>Questions/ application to our lives</b>	<p>What efforts do we make to deliver the Word of God to other people in our lives? Instead of working as individuals, are there opportunities for teamwork, for example, within our local church?</p> <p>During times when others reject God’s Word or do not wish to listen, does Mark’s gospel provide comfort that we are not responsible for their response to God?</p>	<p>What can we learn from the clear linkage between the faithful obedience of Amos and the message conveyed in Mark’s gospel? In recognising that obedience to God is a true test of a faithful servant, are we obeying God’s call so us? In spreading God’s word, what should we do to prepare? In what ways does reading about the lives of the prophets in the Old Testament help?</p>	<p>Do we freely accept that we belong to God, our creator, and that we, his children, were always part of his plan? Do we sometimes believe that we cannot be saved because we fall short of God’s standards in the way we live? If so, do Paul’s words provide reassurance during times of doubt? How do we respond to God’s love for us?</p>
<b>Further reading</b>	Catechism 849-856	Catechism 1122, 1533	Catechism 693, 698, 706