

## **15<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time-B**

Some are called to be evangelizers and some are called to be prophets. You and I are Christians and we are called to be evangelizers and prophets in some way for the good of the Church and for proclaiming the Good News of salvation in Jesus Christ.

The early Church recognized that there are many ways to live out this calling of evangelization and prophecy. Not all are called in the same way. On the other hand, we all recognize that we must give witness to the presence of Jesus in our lives. Thus, if we are put to the test, we must proclaim Jesus by our words and by our way of living.

The first reading today, from the Prophet Amos, is a statement from that prophet, telling us that God took him and forcibly made him a prophet to Israel. He did not want this calling but had to be faithful to what God asked of him. This can happen to us also. More and more we see the values given to us in Scripture and given to us by Jesus Himself being put to the test in this world. We will be asked to deny these values and we must be prepared to stand the test and be faithful to the Lord.

Today we can find many ways to soften the teachings of Scripture and of Jesus, to cast doubts on His word and what it means for the present day Christian. But in time, we will see that this has all been in vain. The secular culture wants us Christians to abandon all values except those agreed upon by secular culture. We are being invited to become like the professional prophets, who simply tell others and their rulers whatever they want to hear. This assures these prophets a living and brings comfort to those who want to hear religious figures affirming that the secular values are just fine.

The Gospel of Mark today picks up this same theme: proclaim the Word of the Lord! Proclaim this word to others and be prepared to be rejected. There will be some who will not welcome you and who do not want to listen to you. Don't waste your time with them. Instead, go on to those who do welcome you and listen to you.

These two readings are pretty strong teaching for us today. Most of us prefer not to get involved in controversy and even less in religious controversy. We should be able to see, however, that the direction of most developed countries today is in the direction of the denial of all religious values and rights.

The second reading today, from the Letter to the Ephesians, reminds us that we have heard the word of truth, the gospel of salvation, and have believed in Jesus and have been sealed with the promised Holy Spirit. We must be prepared to die for our faith. Even more, we must be prepared to live for our faith today, when so often this faith is being questioned and sorely maligned.

May each and every one of us have courage; may each and every one of us remain faithful to the Church, may each and every one of us embrace the full teachings of Jesus Christ and may each and every one of us be prepared to live this faith unto death. Amen!

- Fr. David M. Chiantella