

**15<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Year B. July 12, 2015**

**Readings- Amos 7: 12-15, Psalm 85, Ephesians 1: 3-4, Mark 6:7-13.**

**God Calls and Sends Us To Be His Witnesses**

**“We are witnesses not of an ideology, of a recipe, of a particular theology. We are witnesses to the healing and merciful love of Jesus...To pass by, without hearing the pain of our people, without sinking roots in their lives and in their world, is like listening to the word of God without letting it take root and bear fruit in our hearts” (Pope Francis’ message at a gathering with priests, religious, and seminarians at the Coliseo Don Bosco in Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Bolivia’s largest city, July 9, 2015).**

The Eucharist we celebrate gives us the opportunity to share in the richness of God’s blessings through the prayers, songs, readings, homilies, liturgical gestures etc. We share in these blessings through our active and full participation in the Mass. However, these experiences are not meant to be left behind the four walls of the sacred space, but to be seen in our day-to-day life. Hence, at the end of each mass we are sent forth “**go**” to begin to live out these experiences with one another by being truly witnesses to the gospel (Acts 1: 8).

The readings of today invite us to reflect on different people that were called and sent to become witnesses at different times. The prophet Amos in the first reading was called from being a dresser of sycamore tree to a prophet. He is known as a prophet of social justice because he preached against the social ills in Israel. The priest of Bethel-Amaziah, however, misunderstood him and asked him to leave Bethel, but Amos didn’t give up on his mission. Similarly, Jesus in the gospel called and sent his disciples to go, preach and heal in his name. He brought to their awareness that they may encounter rejection, but asked them not to give up their mission. The disciples in obedience to Christ’s instructions went, preached and healed in his name.

God in his infinite love has chosen us and continues to bestow on us the spiritual blessings through Christ as St. Paul describes in the second reading. These spiritual blessings we receive through the sacraments, especially the Eucharist are meant to be bear fruits that make us true witnesses as Amos and the disciples were. In the Eucharist God showers us with the blessings of his love, forgiveness and peace. He calls and sends us to become agents of these blessings through our perseverance. We pray that God will help us to respond heartily to these blessings and share them with one another. Amen.

***“I chose you and I commissioned you to go out and bear fruit, fruit that will last....”***  
***(John 15: 16).***