

## HOMILY – 15<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY OF THE YEAR – 15 JULY 2018

It is a humbling moment, or it should be, when someone comes into the workplace and shows a giftedness that you do not possess.

Amos, the country peasant, who is uneducated, goes into the Temple at Bethel and preaches a sermon that the King's Official Prophet, Amaziah, was incapable of giving. This country lad, who is more used to looking after sheep and sycamore trees, has the ability to command the people's attention because he has the Spirit of God within him, in other words, 'A true servant of God'.

There is always a risk in life that some people do their work for money or for prestige but their hearts are not in it – "going through the motions". It is such a shame, if a prophet, or a teacher or a priest, has lost a sense of their vocation and only do their work in order to be paid. It is as if part of them has died or given up, lost the spirit to be truly life-giving, needs restoration.

St Paul encourages us, in the second reading, to embrace that deep appreciation for our work and our lives. To recognise how much we have to thank God for, especially for Jesus. He declares boldly, in Ephesus, "Blessed be God, who has blessed us with all the spiritual blessings of Heaven in Christ". When we truly give thanks to Christ, for our freedom, the forgiveness of our sins, the mystery of His purpose and thereby life made complete, by the same Christ. If we are truly grateful for life and not always looking for things to complain about, God helps us to see beyond our own personal difficulties and rejoice in all that life offers and brings.

Pope Francis's recent Apostolic letter, is entitled, "The Call to Holiness" and in it he refreshingly encourages us to know that the call to holiness is essentially about doing our daily work, no matter how mundane/ordinary, with faith and gratitude to God in prayer. There are two subtle enemies of holiness. Be careful not to make the mistake to see the way to holiness through intellect, knowledge and self-awareness. Then we fall into the heresy of pride and conceit. Also, don't try to be holy, by your own efforts above all else. It is only by God's grace and mercy that we truly experience holiness. Don't try and be in control, only God is in control.

That is where the Gospel fits in so well today. Jesus, sending out his Apostles, with the greatest asset they will ever need, true Faith. If you have true faith in God, then, from little beginnings, great graces will come and all the time you must keep trusting.

Like what happened to Amos, the shepherd boy and carer of trees. I am just back from Lourdes, where 160 years ago, a poor, uneducated shepherd girl call Bernadette, became a messenger to the world, after the apparitions from Our Lady. This unlikely prophet was called, in faith, to tell the world to repent, to pray the rosary and live simply. We would be fools to ignore the same message today. Bernadette obeyed the command of Mary, to dig into the muddy sludge of the town 'coupe' and out would come a spring of pure clean mountain water.

Let us today dig through the soiled, discontent, disillusionment and cynicism of our doubt-filled and ungrateful lives and recognise the beauty of what Jesus is asking us to do today, to flow out of us refreshingly. To listen carefully, in our prayers, to where God is leading us, so that we may be a true prophet, teacher or priest of our times.

God Bless you All.

