

Fifteenth Sunday Ordinary Time - B - 2018
Amos 7.12-15///Ephesians 1.3-14///Mark 6.7-13

→over the past week many of us have been caught up in the story of the 12 young boys in Thailand trapped underground in a cave for a number of weeks...

→on Tuesday came the news that all 12 has escaped and were out of the cave....

→whenever we hear of such stories....of people emerging alive after long ordeals in dangerous situations.....most of us are usually inspired and amazed.

→very often we get engrossed in these stories....about people trying to survive under impossible circumstances....

→the T.V. show “Survivor” is even based on this premise....a group of people are dropped off in a strange land, under severe circumstances with the hope and dream of surviving impossible conditions...and of becoming the “sole survivor” and in the case of the show...the winner of the game!

--well in today’s Gospel passage...we hear how Jesus prepares the Apostles for surviving their mission as well....their mission of spreading the news about Jesus Christ.

--Jesus tells them to announce and give witness that the promised day of salvation is at hand...and they are to do this by curing the sick /// raising the dead /// and healing those broken in body and spirit

→they were to give freely and generously of themselves to others

→[and] they were to preach that the Kingdom of God was at hand.....and for those who were unwilling to welcome them and their message.....

→they were to leave and shake the dust of that town from their feet.

→and so, today's readings offer us several important lessons...because side by side, like triplets standing in a row, they confront us with the meaning and mission of discipleship

---the readings deal with the call of discipleship in our world....and they echo the same theme that we have been hearing about for past few weeks.....our call and duty to be true disciples of Christ in our world today

→however what I find MOST INTERESTING is exactly who Jesus entrusts this mission....this discipleship too

→because he basically chose 12 ordinary people to do some extraordinary work-----and likewise he has chosen you and me to do the same.

→all of us have been called to be prophets, to be disciples of the gospel

→and we see, J. was not very interested in powerful, OR exceptionally brilliant, or well-schooled people to spread God's word

PAUSE

→I have always been amazed at just who J. asked to be his disciples....

→he asked Andrew---who lacked a sense of adventure... a sense of risk----[recall] Andrew was the one who asked "what can anyone do w/ 5 loaves and 2 fishes

→Jesus chose Phillip---a patriot, a fighter, the flag-waver....Phillip wanted and insisted that Jesus act like a majestic king to get his message across to the people

→Like Phillip, Jesus chose Simon, --Simon always wanted to fight and he thought redemption would be gained by fighting everyone who was against them

→then there was Nathaniel...he lacked openness and sincerity and trust...he had the nerve to ask Jesus..."can anything good come out of Nazareth?"

→Thomas was a doubter.....we all know his story

→Judas was a crook

→Matthew was a tax collector

→then there was Thaddeus...we don't hear too much about him because Thaddeus was a realist, he once said to Jesus "why not just reveal yourself as the Messiah to the world, show them who's boss...and let's get this all over with"

→James was a chauvinist.....he insisted that Christianity and redemption was only for the Jewish people and nobody else

→James/John, were ambitious and pushy....they were most concerned about themselves, wanting to know who would be sitting on the right and on the left

→and finally there is Peter, who was the leader of this group....he denied Jesus in his time of need and more than once, never did understand anything that was going on or what J. was saying or what Jesus was doing and he was in charge of the whole show!

[And so there you have it]....→this was the crew that J. assembled to carry out his mission,

→and now Jesus is calling you and me, to be the 13th disciple [if you will]

→Jesus took 12 ordinary, not-to-intelligent people, and sent them out to do his work....to bring his message of salvation to the world

→and...like those 12 ordinary people have too been chosen to do the same

-- PAUSE --

→we are the disciples of today, the comfortable//fearful//weak//timid//the ordinary factory worker///executive///sales person///student///teacher///farmer and gardener

→and as disciple of Jesus, we have been called to walk with the hungry, to help the poor, to care for the wounded, to watch out for those not heard and stand up for those treated unjustly

→....to work for peace...to live in harmony and to proclaim the gospel message

PAUSE

→this call is an invitation///an offer///and a challenge to you and me

→an invitation to embrace the message of Christ

→an offer to live the gospel mission and a challenges us to make something of our lives

→we are very ordinary people, no better or worse than those chosen by Jesus long ago

→ordinary people who have been called forth, w/God's help to do some extraordinary things.

[In the end].....It is a mission that has been given to us...and it is a mission that is anything but impossible!