

15th Ordinary Sunday
July 11, 2021
“Prophets and Corrections”

Am 7:12-15
Eph 1:3-10
Mk 6:7-13

My Brothers and Sisters in the Lord –

One of the most difficult aspects of all interpersonal relationships is giving and taking correction. Correcting others and taking it ourselves can seem like a very forbidding undertaking. Even the most thoughtful correction can reap problems both practically and emotionally for ourselves and for others.

No one likes to hear that they are doing something that hurts themselves or others. Likewise, no one wants to learn that they are failing toward others in the many ways in which we can.

One of the things we have to face is that we can see the faults and the mistakes of others, far better than we can see our own – For, sadly, very often we are blind to the very things in ourselves that we see and hope to correct in others.

We can, also, refuse to accept correction from those who are far from perfect themselves. It is a case of “the pot calling the kettle black”, as the old saying goes!

The prophets of the Old Testament were sent by God to correct the Chosen People when they failed. God’s People continually failed in their obligations to Him and to one another.

The Promised Land was divided into two autonomous kingdoms at the time of Amos the prophet. In today’s first reading, Amos is completely rejected while trying to correct the northern kingdom of Israel. He is told that he has no business there. He is a “foreigner” from the southern kingdom of Judah!

Nevertheless, Amos responds that he is not a professional prophet like others – who were often paid to tell others what they wanted to hear. Instead, he was called from the orchards and livestock – and commanded by God to speak for God Himself! He was to urge them to correct their ways of corruption, indulgence, and hardheartedness toward the majority who were poor. However, Israel failed to listen. Subsequently, it was conquered and the people were deported to Assyria.

In St. Mark's Gospel, Jesus is well aware that his disciples could be rejected in their missionary apprenticeship. They were to preach the Gospel of conversion, repentance, and salvation throughout the locale. But, they were to travel light. They could not be seen as attached to the things of this world. They were to accept any real hospitality and not look for better accommodations. Moreover, if they were rejected, they should leave without a second thought – and bring the Good News somewhere else.

St. Paul gives us a marvelous revelation into Jesus as the greatest of all prophets and the Son of God. Jesus brought us the deliverance and the salvation that we all so desperately want and need. He revealed the depths of God's love and brought us redemption by the sacrificial offering of himself. And St. Paul tells us just how blessed we are in all that Jesus has done for us. We are blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavens. We were chosen in the mind of God before creation began. We are called to be truly holy and without blemish because we have been adopted as children of God! This was accomplished through our God-Man Brother, Jesus, the Risen Christ! Moreover, although we are so imperfect and sinful, we can still have forgiveness through Jesus – if we truly repent and change our lives.

Our repentance must be on-going, because we fail, again and again, as we go through life. Furthermore, as we enter new areas of conversion and growth, we discover even more areas of blindness that we must reform.

Brothers and Sisters, in taking correction we must be patient, humble, and never defensive. In giving correction we must be gentle with others. We might have to be very firm, especially with family and those we love – but we must also be kind and loving as well. Impatience and anger only hurt others and ourselves. In fact, sometimes, the best way to correct is by asking the right questions – Thus, we can lead others to the truth they cannot see.

Again, if we are corrected ourselves, we must look at the truth in whatever is said. We must never reject correction because of the flaws in the messenger. For the only messenger and prophet who was perfect – was Jesus himself!

So, let us pray to be open to correction – however it comes. Let us correct others only after prayer and with God's direction – And may we, someday – and all of us together – inherit everything that Jesus has won for us!

Amen.

July 11, 2021

Msgr. Russell G. Terra