

15th Sunday in Ordinary Time

In this material world, our achievements usually qualify us for selection as recognition of our achievements. The readings take a different view of selection. Those selected are chosen not for their own edification but service to the community. They are picked not for what they have done but for what they will accomplish. When they are selected they must serve.

In the first reading, God selected Amos from Judah, the southern kingdom, to preach in Bethel in the northern kingdom. The rich in the north treated the poor as slaves. The economic gap grew wider. Amos' distasteful task was to tell the rich that the end was near. They should reform their treatment of the poor. In the completion of his work, Amos demonstrated that when selected one must serve.

In the 2nd reading, Paul tells of the plan of salvation. That God chose God's people before the world began for the purpose of genuine Christian living. This selection implies liberation due to the self-giving of Christ. This selection empowers us to provide hope for a divided world. To this degree, the reading implies that when selected one must serve.

In the Gospel, the disciples are an extension of Christ's own ministry. The lack of concern for material comforts; only sandals, no money, and only one tunic translates into the urgency of the disciples' task. The charge of the twelve focuses on the needs of the community. Some rejection will happen as happened to Jesus. When this happens they are to shake the dust from their feet so as to remove the last vestige of contact with a pagan atmosphere. When one is selected one must serve.