

# **CELEBRATE SABBATH**

## **Fifteenth Sunday of the Year**

**When you encounter difficulties and contradictions,  
do not try to break them but bend them with gentleness and time.**

(St. Francis de Sales)

### **Amos 7:12-15**

Amos, shepherd, and a dresser of Sycamore was called by God to travel from his home in Judah to the Northern Kingdom of Israel. It was during the reign of Jeroboam II (786-746 B.C.E.) and Israel was at the peak of power and prosperity. Amos came as a missionary prophet to a people who had “plenty”, power, wealth, influence, elegance, and glamour in the cities. Palaces had power, the wealthy had winter and summer residences with costly ivory (3:12-15) and anointed themselves with precious oils (6:4-6, 5:11). Their women drank wine from bowls (4:1) and Amos called them “fat cows of Bashan”. There was sharp contrast between the rich and poor, gross injustice prevailed and the wealthy were unconcerned about their poor neighbors.

Amos came to address the prevailing injustice. He cried out, “you do not even know how to do right” (3:10); “the poor are exploited and even sold into slavery” (2:6-8; 5:11) and corrupt judges do nothing to correct the situation. He was bold, courageous, and outspoken and he soon became unpopular. Today’s first reading (7:12-15), we read about Amziah, the priest at one of the Northern shrines trying to banish Amos and telling him to go and prophesy in his own land of Judah. He even accused Amos of conspiring against the king (7:11).

**Be just in all your relationships. Recognize the injustice in society and speak boldly against it. Do all you can to bring about justice in the world.**

Amos was bold, courageous and faithful to his calling. He claimed no importance of his own. He said that it was God’s choice and not his. He claimed only to be a shepherd and dresser of Sycamore and not a prophet. God had called him and commissioned him to be a prophet. He accepted the call and remained faithful.

**Be faithful to your calling! Be bold and courageous in fulfilling your mission!**

### **Psalm 85**

The long journey home from Babylon to Zion was an important part of Israel’s history. God had forgiven them and brought them back home. Now the Psalmist says, God has restored the

fortunes of Jacob. He has not just brought them home from exile, but has now rehabilitated them, just as the great prophet Isaiah had proclaimed (Isaiah 40).

They were confused and disillusioned and yet found great joy and confidence as they began to rebuild their ruined city and temple. And they prayed, "God, restore us again and put us at right with yourself as you have done in the past". Doubts and fears continued, "Is God still angry with us for our failures...how could he forgive us for our infidelities?"

The Psalmist tells them that they are listening to wrong voices and calls them to listen to the voice of God. God speaks peace to His people, not anger or hatred. God's love and faithfulness have embraced. His love and fidelity have become one...they have fused into one. He cannot but love. God's covenant love is absolutely reliable. What an amazing discovery this is for Israel!!

Discovering the unfailing, steadfast nature of Covenant love gave the returnees of exile the confidence they needed. They could now sing and shout: Faithfulness will spring from the ground...the Lord will give what is good...earth will yield". This really is the amazing Grace that we contemplate today.

**Kindness and peace shall meet;  
Justice and peace shall kiss.  
Truth shall spring out of the earth,  
and justice shall look down from heaven.**

### **Ephesians 1:3-14**

This is a beautiful prayer-hymn that centers around the theme, "God chose us in Jesus Christ and will raise us to everlasting life in Jesus Christ". Therefore, we must live holy and blameless lives in response to this noble calling. This life must be lived in Christ. In Christ we have been brought into the mystery of the fullness of God's life and love.

**God has chosen us in Christ. Be faithful to this noble calling. Live holy and blameless lives!**

### **Mark 6:7-13**

Jesus sent out his disciples with his mission and his authority. He instructed them to live a simple life dependant on God and a humble acceptance of the welcome and hospitality of those whom they serve. They were ordinary men and they were sent with all their imperfections. What they had was a desire to follow their master and fulfill his mission. They were to collaborate with others in fulfilling the mission. They were to be ambassadors, representatives of a community with a mission from their master and not as individuals with an agenda of their own. Jesus also prepared them for the rejection that they would experience. They were not to force themselves on anyone. Their message was to be shared freely and without expecting rewards.

**We have a mission to bring the good news of forgiveness, healing and redemption. Our mission is a share in the mission of Jesus. We must collaborate in fulfilling this mission of our master. Let us be faithful to this calling!**

**Saint of the Day, July 14 - St. Kateri Tekawitha and 12 other saints are remembered this day.**

Kateri was born in a village near Auriesville, New York in 1656. She was the daughter of a Mohawk chief and her mother was a Christian Algonquin. She was four when her mother died of rubella. She also contracted this disease which disfigured her face. After this event that marked all her life, Kateri was adopted by her two aunts and her uncle.

Kateri converted to Catholicism during her adolescence. She was baptized at the age of twenty and this caused great hostility towards her on the part of her tribe. Although she had to suffer greatly for her faith, she stood firm in her beliefs.

Because of her conversion, she was treated as a slave among her own people. Her life was in danger because of her faith, so she fled on foot 200 miles to a Christian Indian village near Montreal, Canada. She lived only four more years, but in that time, she developed a deep spirituality and devotion to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. She devoted herself to teaching prayers to the children and helping the sick and elderly. She prayed for hours every day and practiced strenuous fasting for the conversion of her nation. She died in 1680. Pope Benedict XVI canonized Saint Kateri Tekakwitha on October 21, 2012. She is the first canonized Native American saint.

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