



Bringing Home the Word

Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time | July 15, 2018

Discerning God's Call

By Mary Katharine Deeley

Spiritually, discernment is the process of listening for and responding to God's call. It's a popular activity these days in churches, schools, and businesses. Discerning the right career, the right person for a job—or even the right person to marry—occupies a lot of adults. I often talk about discernment with college students because Catholic tradition has much to offer to the process.

We can draw some principles of discernment from our readings today. From Ephesians, we learn that God has

called us into the mission of Christ and to praise his glory in the world. Does the life you live now allow you to do that with a full heart? From Amos, we learn that God doesn't call only the ones we think are holy enough, brave enough, or religious enough. God calls all of us wherever he finds us. Amos was a dresser of sycamore trees. We might be teachers, parents, or students in school, but we are all part of Christ's mission by baptism. Finally, in Mark, we learn that mission is a communal affair. We are together in mission. We are to go into every house, depending on God to tell us what to do and give us what we need.

With our different gifts, we help each other spread God's word and love those we meet. Finally, we learn that not everyone will hear us, but we must not let that weigh us down. We must shake the dust from our feet and move on. These and other principles of discernment can apply no matter where we find ourselves along the road. How have you responded to God's call today? +

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Sunday Readings

Amos 7:12–15

[Amos said,] "I am a herdsman and a dresser of sycamores, but ...the LORD said to me, 'Go, prophesy to my people Israel.'"

Ephesians 1:3–14 or 1:3–10

In him we have redemption by his blood.

Mark 6:7–13

[Jesus said,] "Whatever place does not welcome you... leave there and shake the dust off your feet."

A Word From Pope Francis

Jesus himself tells us in no uncertain terms that we will be judged by the mercy we show to the poor: those who hunger and thirst, the naked, the stranger, the sick, and those in prison. Particularly in our prosperous societies, Christians are called to guard against the temptation of indifference.

—Jubilee Audience, June 30, 2016



REFLECTION QUESTIONS



- How do I participate in the Church's mission of serving the poor?
- What more can I do to educate my children or others about this important subject?



Accepting That God Has Chosen Us

By Richard Rohr, OFM

It was not because you are more numerous than all the peoples that the LORD set his heart on you and chose you; for you are really the smallest of all peoples (Deuteronomy 7:7).

God has chosen us. That is simple and clear. But for us to accept that we are chosen is difficult, just as it was for Israel. God chooses each of us—not to “raise us up a notch,” but to lead us through necessary, transformative journeys so we can allow ourselves to be beloved, and to relish a mutual relationship. At Pentecost the Spirit is poured out on “all humankind” regardless of status.

The election of the Jews, God’s Chosen People, eventually becomes a message for the whole world and not something to keep them superior or apart. It will take the prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah, Jonah, Jesus himself, the rest of the Book of Acts, and the fierce ministry of Paul to resolve God’s universality. Because the implications of “one God who created all things” gradually became clear, they soon called this new religion “catholic.” Our attempts to limit this election have often made us more ethnic than catholic. Not only does God end up looking very small, but we do, too.

We are ready for the great outpouring of the Holy Spirit only after fifty days of enjoying the wisdom of the risen Christ. It takes a while to move from “Jesus as mine” to “Jesus as everybody’s.”

Originally only Paul was strong enough to understand this, and his ministry to the Gentiles (most of us!) was scandalous to James and Peter. He had to argue with Peter about this, and God had to give Peter a vision to prove it to him.

Choosing, Changing

When God makes a choice, it’s definitive and irrevocable. God does not love us *if* we change, but *so* that we can change.

God has not stopped choosing Israel any more than God stops choosing us because we do not respond (see Romans 11). As Catholic tradition and recent popes have affirmed, the Jews are still the Chosen People.

God’s love is never determined by the worthiness of the one loved, which is difficult for us to comprehend—because that is the only way we know how to love. The biblical God seems both extremely patient and extremely humble. This is good news, for where would we be if God’s choice depended upon our response?

Since God’s choice is not determined by the worthiness of the chosen, the Bible speaks of God’s love as being faithful, forever, and like a rock! We never keep our side of the contract, yet God always

rises to the occasion and holds up God’s side. You could say that is the very definition of what it means to be God and what it means to be human in the Bible: Humanity always fails, God always saves.

Resting, Rejoicing

As humans, we cannot recognize another person’s inherent, God-given goodness until we have rested in that lovely place ourselves. God is inviting us first of all to rest and rejoice in what it means to be God’s beloved son or daughter. When we have learned to live for that chosenness, then can we communicate that same beloved status to anybody in any situation at any level of depth, joy, or freedom.

This is the only wedding feast there is. If we have been there, we can proclaim a true, new alternative to the drudgery and darkness of this world. This is healthy, happy religion, and it’s offered to us. +

PRAYER

Lord, you offered your life in humble service to humanity. Empower me with your Spirit, that I may be a humble servant of love and compassion to all people.

From Faithful Meditations for Every Day in Ordinary Time, Rev. Warren J. Savage and Mary Ann McSweeney

WEEKDAY READINGS

July 16–21, 2018

Monday, Weekday:
Is 1:10–17 / Mt 10:34–11:1

Tuesday, Weekday:
Is 7:1–9 / Mt 11:20–24

Wednesday, Weekday:
Is 10:5–7, 13b–16 / Mt 11:25–27

Thursday, Weekday:
Is 26:7–9, 12, 16–19 / Mt 11:28–30

Friday, Weekday:
Is 38:1–6, 21–22, 7–8 / Mt 12:1–8

Saturday, Weekday:
Mi 2:1–5 / Mt 12:14–21