

Monday Week 13 of Ordinary Time

First reading

Amos 2:6-10,13-16

Because of your crimes I will crush you into the ground

The Lord says this:

For the three crimes, the four crimes, of Israel

I have made my decree and will not relent:

because they have sold the virtuous man for silver

and the poor man for a pair of sandals,

because they trample on the heads of ordinary people

and push the poor out of their path,

because father and son have both resorted to the same girl,

profaning my holy name,

because they stretch themselves out by the side of every altar

on clothes acquired as pledges,

and drink the wine of the people they have fined

in the house of their god...

Yet it was I who overthrew the Amorites when they attacked,

men tall as cedars and strong as oaks,

I who destroyed them,

both fruit above ground

and root below.

It was I who brought you out of the land of Egypt

and for forty years led you through the wilderness

to take possession of the Amorite's country.

See then how I am going to crush you into the ground

as the threshing-sledge crushes when clogged by straw;

flight will not save even the swift,

the strong man will find his strength useless,

the mighty man will be powerless to save himself.

The bowman will not stand his ground,

the fast runner will not escape,

the horseman will not save himself,

the bravest warriors will run away naked that day.

It is the Lord who speaks.

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 49(50):16-23

Mark this, you who never think of God.

‘How can you recite my commandments

and take my covenant on your lips,

you who despise my law

and throw my words to the winds?

Mark this, you who never think of God.

‘You who see a thief and go with him;

who throw in your lot with adulterers,

who unbridle your mouth for evil

and whose tongue is plotting crime.
Mark this, you who never think of God.
‘You who sit and malign your brother
and slander your own mother’s son.
You do this, and should I keep silence?
Do you think that I am like you?
Mark this, you who never think of God.
‘Mark this, you who never think of God,
lest I seize you and you cannot escape;
a sacrifice of thanksgiving honours me
and I will show God’s salvation to the upright.’
Mark this, you who never think of God.

Gospel

Matthew 8:18-22

The Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head

When Jesus saw the great crowds all about him he gave orders to leave for the other side. One of the scribes then came up and said to him, ‘Master, I will follow you wherever you go.’ Jesus replied, ‘Foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.’

Another man, one of his disciples, said to him, ‘Sir, let me go and bury my father first.’ But Jesus replied, ‘Follow me, and leave the dead to bury their dead.’

Reflection

The first reading is from the prophet Amos. Prophecy is a grace and a ministry pronouncing the Word of God to His people in a particular time and place about contemporary issues. It is not about predicting the future, but because prophets speak the Word of God, God’s power is released to shape the future beyond the prophets’ own vision. Therefore, what Amos has to say to his contemporaries, is also relevant to us many centuries later.

Amos prophesied about the middle of the eighth century BC. He delivered his message from the shrine at Bethel, from which he was dismissed after Amaziah the priest, complained to the king about him (Amos 12:10-13). His ministry may have been only this one occasion as the introduction to *Amos* implies a single occasion; “*two years before the earthquake*” (Amos 1:1). The earthquake, which had done considerable damage to Israel, induced a sense that the whole foundation of Israel was also to collapse.

Amos’ message was radical; demonstrating that God’s promises would end because Israel had become an idolatrous nation, relishing in its riches (Amos 6:4-8), and paying lip service to true worship (Amos 5:21-25). As well as condemning the falseness of their religious practice, he focussed on their disregard for the poor a theme taken up by today’s responsorial psalm. In today’s Gospel,

Jesus says that the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head (Mt. 8:20), reminding us that in becoming man, God the Son gave up His heavenly riches and identified above all with the poor.

The Church has therefore always had a preferential option for the poor, and this is something that we as members of the Church, the Body of Christ, must never forget. Next week, the One World group will be appealing for support, so that we, the Body of Christ in Malvern, can support those who are not as materially fortunate as we are. Supporting the poor is not optional; it is integral to our Christian vocation.

Carol Ann Harnett 29th June 2020