

You are the Elect! Blessed in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavens, chosen before the foundations of the world to be holy and without blemish. In Christ we have redemption and forgiveness. We are the beloved of God. Now, in being disciples of Jesus, this is our first task. To know this belovedness, hold it in our bones, our souls.

It is hard. I know I often forget this and act from my limited and fearful self. We ask for help from our sisters and brothers and most importantly and insistently from our Lord in knowing our belovedness. Our readings today and over the last few weeks show us how to live out being beloved of God, calling us to act as disciples, ones being sent out to live the call of God, the will of the Father. At the end of mass, I have the privilege to proclaim our call, which starts with going out into our community and doing the work that is the source and destination of our faith. Today the prophet Amos reminds us that we are all called as prophets. At our baptism each us is anointed (priest, prophet, and king) for this role that is sharing the Good News in authentic and powerful ways, often difficult to hear and difficult to share. Amos says, “the Lord took me” as the Lord takes each of us, “go, prophesize to my people.”

We are called to preach the euangelion, literally the Good News, with the hope and prayer that there will be repentance, a change of mind, within us and in those we are present to. Our psalm speaks to the manner of this preaching, and this is the hard part. It says, “Kindness and truth shall meet; justice and peace shall kiss.” Our truth is of forgiveness and mercy. Our justice is fulfilled in love and charity. Only in God can these tensions be held. Can we love ourselves, our sisters and brothers, even our enemies? We are sinners, all of us. I appreciate Pope Francis’ first interview where he was asked “who Jorge Mario Bergoglio is?” He answered that he was a sinner, like all of us. But we are called to higher things and sharing those things, kindness and truth shall meet; justice and peace shall kiss. Bishop Robert Barron writing on this gospel explains the challenge of sharing the gospel. We are bringing God’s gifts to impact the world and our own fallenness. The effects of evil set one against the other, dividing families, nations, and churches. Evil accuses and often families and societies collapse in mutual blaming. So, our work of prophecy and discipleship enters into this breach with truth and justice, kindness and peace. Our salvation is a dynamic process

of God's loving kindness, faithfulness, righteousness, and peace active in our discipleship and ministry. Like Amos we might say, "we are no prophet, nor have we belonged to a company of prophets." But before the foundation of the world, Jesus has chosen us, sent us out.

So, as we take up this work in the journey of our discipleship, may we hear St Paul's prayer for the Ephesians ringing in our ears, "May the eyes of [your] hearts be enlightened, that you may know what is the hope that belongs to his call, what are the riches of glory in his inheritance among the holy ones, and what is the surpassing greatness of his power for us who believe."