

Homily – St. Benedict Church

July 11, 2018

Today, Jesus sends his disciples to proclaim the good news of the kingdom of God -- a place of justice and peace, mercy and compassion, harmony and unity. It is God's plan for us, and we all share responsibility – because of our baptism – for striving to build up the kingdom of God in this place and time.

Are we ready to do this? Were the Twelve Apostles ready at this point in Jesus' ministry? Peter, impulsive, always ready with an answer (of his private opinion, not of God's plan), wants to walk on water, assures Jesus that he will stand with him in any adversity – just a few hours before denying three times that he even knew him? Or Thomas, the doubter? Matthew, a former despised tax collector preying upon the poor? Or perhaps Judas Iscariot? No, they were not ready! But the gospel cannot wait until we are fully ready and prepared. It needs to be proclaimed here and now!

The prophet Amos prophesied in Israel during a time of prosperity, but also a time of infidelity to God. There was idolatry, false worship, social injustice, the rich getting richer and the poor poorer because of government policies. The prophet tells the people

that they are relying on their own resources, and the future would be quite different unless they came to their senses and returned to God and treated their neighbors fairly and justly.

Those who view everything through a political lens often tell priests and bishops to stay out of politics when they enter the pulpit. However, it is impossible – impossible! -- to proclaim the word of God without including what the Bible says on virtually every page about social justice. We live in difficult, dark times. The forces of evil are everywhere, sowing discord, chaos, violence. Many are confused and ignore the word of God about the kingdom of God. Missionary disciples of the risen Lord find their strength in Jesus' power dwelling within them. We are to proclaim the word of God faithfully, consistently, and boldly! Most important, we are to live it every day of our lives!

Our Lady of Guadalupe is with us! The Holy Spirit empowers us and gives us courage, wisdom, and prudence to carry out our God-given mission of proclaiming God's word to all whom we encounter. We are not ready but we are sent to proclaim the gospel!