

Blessed Trinity Catholic Community + Spirit of Christ Mission

Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time B ~ July 14, 2024

Homily: Deacon Jim Kaney

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“Ite missa Est.” Decades ago, our liturgies concluded with the priest saying those three Latin words. And we the people responded “Deo gratias”. We all thought that “Ite Missa Est” meant “Go it is the dismissal’ or “Go the Mass is over” and Deo gratias meant “Thanks be to God” – or on some hot and humid days when I was wearing a heavy black cotton cassock, I knew that it all meant - Thanks be to God the Mass is over.

However, the literal translation of “Ite Missa Est” to English is “Go, it is sent.” The ‘it’ is the church – the church is sent; the ‘it’ in our Gospel is the apostles – the apostles are sent; the ‘it’ is you and I; we are sent.

In our gospel two things happen to the apostles. First, they are called, summoned by Jesus; then they are sent by him. We would expect that Jesus would list for those apostles the many items they needed to get ready to take with them when they would depart. All of us often do that as we prepare for a trip, with lists of what to pack, plane departure times and connections, even lists of items to look for at the grocery store. Instead, our Lord tells them what they are NOT to take – no food, no money, no bag or sack, no extra tunic. These very things he lists are those items we might think will be very necessary for the apostles. But they are to take only a walking stick and the sandals on their feet. They are sent.

And us? What are we to take with us as we are sent? Nothing but the messages of the Gospels and our faith and a belief in the transforming power of our Lord that we are asked to witness and share with others.

And that is not easy, we know that. Our first reading shows Amos with no status or support for his message of repentance, yet he preached courageously without fear or compromise. Today it is risky and dangerous to admit that you are a committed Catholic Christian; the possibilities of being ridiculed and criticized are growing, Yet our faith must be engaging if it is to grow and develop. Today is not the time for timidity or weakness; instead, keep confidence and faith in the message and mission we are to bring to others. G.K. Chesterton wrote “Christianity has not been tried and found wanting; it has been found difficult and not tried.” Yes, at times it is difficult, and yes, we are sent.

More recently Pope Francis wrote “We have a treasure of life and love which cannot deceive, and a message which cannot mislead or disappoint. It penetrates to the depths of our hearts, sustaining and ennobling us. It is never out of date because it reaches that part of us which nothing else can reach. Our infinite sadness can only be cured by an infinite love.” Yes, we are sent to have that treasure, that infinite and eternal love.

As Father Ed stated 3 times last week “The gospel is not about then, it is about now.” Two thousand years after the apostles were summoned and sent, we too are summoned to be sent. To be sent into a world where the message we can bring may not be welcome, it may not be heard, but a message which must never be muted.

Yes, we are sent to love and serve the Lord and each other.

