

15th Sunday in Ordinary Time, 11 July 2021

Scriptures: Amos 7:12-15; Ephesians 1:3-14; Mark 6:7-13

Homily: Fr. Ken

In the first reading from the Book of the Prophet Amos, we find Amos called by God from his ordinary life and made into a prophet.

In the New Testament reading from Ephesians, St. Paul reassures the Christians in Ephesus that God, through Jesus Christ, has chosen them from all eternity, for a life of service to others, to fulfill their role in the divine plan.

In Mark's Gospel, we see Jesus sending out the apostles, with nothing but God's grace to sustain them, to preach the Gospel and to heal the sick.

Each of these three Scripture readings is about God calling people to serve one another; they are about God calling us to heal a broken and needy world.

While there are a number of significantly relevant Church documents that make real the very scripture passages proclaimed in today's Eucharistic Liturgy, one among many is the 2009 papal encyclical, *Caritas in Veritate* (*Charity in Truth*). It is a social encyclical concerned with the challenges of global development and progress towards the common good.

The encyclical calls for a radical re-thinking of the global economy, criticizing the growing divide between rich and poor, and urging the establishment of a true world political authority to oversee the economy and work progressively for the common good of all. It calls for greater social responsibility and counsels economists in particular to rediscover the genuine ethical foundation of their activity. The encyclical ultimately argues that

the economy must be guided by the two criteria of justice and the common good.

The topics addressed are seven: moral principles; profit; globalization; world hunger and clean water; business ethics; inequality, the environment, and energy needs; and, United Nations reform.

In light of the scripture readings, while each and every one of the seven topics are critically important both locally and internationally, the first three are particularly relevant: principles, profits, and globalization.

Regarding foundational principles, the encyclical states that "charity in truth is the principle around which the Church's social doctrine turns". It is: "a principle that takes on practical form in the criteria that govern moral action: justice and the common good". The encyclical states: "The more we strive to secure a common good corresponding to the real needs of our neighbors, the more effectively we love them. Every Christian is called to practice this charity, in a manner corresponding to one's vocation and according to the degree of influence one wields in the political world... This is the political path of charity, no less excellent and effective than the kind of charity which encounters the neighbor directly".

Regarding profit, in short, the encyclical affirms that while it is useful, once it "becomes the exclusive goal, if it is produced by improper means and without the common good as its ultimate end, it risks destroying wealth and creating poverty".

Regarding globalization, the encyclical states that it "has led to a downsizing of social security systems as the price to be paid for seeking greater competitive advantage in the global market, with consequent grave danger for the rights of workers". The encyclical cites how "budgetary policies, with cuts in social spending often made under pressure from international financial institutions, can leave citizens powerless in the face of old and

new risks; such powerlessness is increased by the lack of effective protection on the part of workers' associations". The encyclical continues: "Through the combination of social and economic change, trade union organizations experience greater difficulty in carrying out their task of representing the interests of workers, partly because governments, for reasons of economic utility, often limit the freedom or the negotiating capacity of labor unions".

Toward the conclusion of the encyclical, *Caritas in Veritate*, the underlying basic premise is re-affirmed: "While the poor of the world continue knocking on the doors of the rich, the world of affluence runs the risk of no longer hearing those knocks, on account of a conscience that can no longer distinguish what is human".

This teaching of our Catholic Church is well worth our careful and thoughtful study and individual and personal reflection.

It will be a great stimulus for each of us as Christians, called by our God to heal a broken and needy world.

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