



Prayer

Loving Father, You have given us the virtue of faith to follow Your Son. May we place our faith in Him alone and find, at the end of our journey on earth, a place with You in heaven. Grant this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Commentary

2nd Reading: Ephesians 1:3-14

Virtue of Faith:
Part 3 of 4

Even before we were born and even before the world was created, God knew that we were chosen in Christ, to be holy. This was our destiny. We call this predestination.

Commentary

Not to be confused with double-predestination which argues that God pre-ordains people to heaven and others to hell without choice,

1st Reading: Amos 7:12-15

Over these last weeks, we have rediscovered the Virtue and power of Faith. This week and next, the Church invites us to carry our faith into the world.

Our first reading shows us how God expects us to share the faith in an urgent way. Although Amos is merely a shepherd and caretaker of sycamore trees, God takes him from his flock of sheep and orders, "Go, prophesy."

Why would God take such a simple person to carry out such a task. Consider, however, that many of the apostles were simple fishermen. They weren't great theologians or preachers. Yet, God called them.

We can all come up with excuses why we should not share our faith in God with others. Chief among these excuses is, "I don't know the Bible or Church teachings well enough to share our faith." However, it should be remembered that God does not call the equipped. He equips the called.

By virtue of our Baptism, we have a share in the prophetic nature of Christ. If we claim to be Christian, we must share our faith without any hesitancy. There is an urgency in our call to be Christian prophets of faith. The Gospel needs to be proclaimed; especially today.

predestination celebrates the divine plan of God to bring those who freely choose to love and serve Him and be happy with him in heaven. Though God has a foreknowledge of our final destination, God does not force us into heaven or into hell.

It is from this understanding of predestination that Paul writes the letter to the Ephesians, "In love he destined us for adoption to himself through Jesus Christ." Though God "chose us in [Christ], before the foundation of the world," we choose to respond to his choice in us. How we respond will determine our final fate.

As in the case of the Prophet Amos in our First Reading, we may protest God's desire to choose us to be his servants. Nevertheless, we must willfully obey his command so that his will may be done.

Question

What holds you back from sharing in the prophetic nature of Christ?

Question

How do you recognize that you have been chosen by God from the foundation of the world?

For more on how to participate in group studies or to lead a group, Visit us at Christ in Our Neighborhood www.christ-ion.com

Commentary

Gospel: Mark 6:7-13

Our readings this weekend have focused on our response to God who chose us and summoned us to be prophetic bearers of His Word.

The Apostles were hand selected by God through Jesus to follow him. In a predestined way, these Apostles were hand picked. Nevertheless, by their own choice, most would flee from the Lord during his Passion, one would deny him, and another would betray him. Still, one remained with him at the cross.

Mark 6:7-13 gives us the scene where the Apostles are first summoned by Jesus who sends them out two-by-two. As in the case of Amos, they are given an authority to be prophetic. They are sent to preach repentance, cure the sick, and expel demons. Unlike the Prophet Amos who protested his calling, the Apostles do what the Lord wills.

When we pray the Our Father, we come to the words, "Thy will be done." God has chosen us and summoned us from the beginning of time to do His will. Whether or not we respond to His summons, we may be sure that His Will is being completed on earth as it is in heaven.

Question

Chosen by God, how is God's Will being accomplished through you?

This Week's Task

Equip yourself to share your faith. Write down six common questions people have about our belief system. Ask your priest or deacon what answer they would give to these questions. Or, visit websites like catholic.com to find your answers. The answers are out there. We just need to take time to look. In this way, you will be better equipped to share your faith with confidence.

Prayer

Heavenly Father,

Pour out your Spirit, so that I might be strengthened to go forth and witness to the Gospel in my everyday life through my words and actions.

"So
they
went
off
and
preached
repentance."

In moments of hesitation, remind me:

If not me, then who will proclaim the Gospel?

If not now, then when will the Gospel be proclaimed?

If not the truth of the Gospel, then what shall I proclaim?

Amen.

The prayer continues with Psalm 85

Psalm

Response: Lord, let us see your kindness, and grant us your salvation.

I will hear what God proclaims;
the LORD—for he proclaims peace.
Near indeed is his salvation to those who fear him, glory
dwelling in our land.

R. Lord, let us see your kindness, and grant us your salvation.

Kindness and truth shall meet;
justice and peace shall kiss.
Truth shall spring out of the earth,
and justice shall look down from heaven.

R. Lord, let us see your kindness, and grant us your salvation.

The LORD himself will give his benefits;
our land shall yield its increase.
Justice shall walk before him,
and prepare the way of his steps.

R. Lord, let us see your kindness, and grant us your salvation.

Conclude with an Our Father