



AMDG
15TH SUNDAY IN
ORDINARY TIME
15TH JULY 2018



Before the world was made, he chose us

OPENING PRAYER

O God, who shows the light of your truth to those who go astray,
so that they may return to the right path,
give all who for the faith they profess are accounted Christians
the grace to reject whatever is contrary to the name of Christ
and strive after all that does it honour.

This Sunday we are drawn to reflect on choices. Before the beginning of all things, God chose us in Christ to be part of the unfolding of his blessing of creation and humanity.

In the *First Reading*, Amos the shepherd tells of how he was not from any of the 'brotherhood of prophets', yet it was he who was chosen to move beyond tending trees and sheep to tending the people of Israel.

The *Psalms* is a song of God's rich blessings. It trusts in the love and tenderness of God to bring forth faithfulness, justice and peace.

The *Second Reading* is taken from the start of the letter to the Ephesians. It is a poetic call for the Christian community to bless God, the source of all blessings. Christ is the head and the heart of the community. We are chosen in Christ! We are alive within and through Christ. It is Christ who unites us to each other and to all of creation.

It is through being blessed in this knowledge that we can set out into the world to spread the Good News. In the *Gospel*, Jesus sends out the twelve he has chosen, to proclaim his message, respond to the needs of the people, and to offer his healing. He instructs the disciples to take next to nothing for their journey.

As we each go out into the world this week, may the way that we live our lives be an act of praise. Let us remember that we are chosen, that we are not alone, and that we can draw strength from knowing we are one with each other, sisters and brothers in Christ. We may be rich or poor materially, but in Christ we have everything.

SECOND READING EPHESIANS 1: 3–14 (short form)

Blessed be God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with all the spiritual blessings of heaven in Christ. Before the world was made, he chose us, chose us in Christ, to be holy and spotless, and to live through love in his presence, determining that we should become his adopted sons and daughters, through Jesus Christ for his own kind purposes, to make us praise the glory of his grace, his free gift to us in the Beloved, in whom, through his blood, we gain our freedom, the forgiveness of our sins. Such is the richness of the grace which he has showered on us in all wisdom and insight. He has let us know the mystery of his purpose, the hidden plan he so kindly made in Christ from the beginning, to act upon when the times had run their course to the end: that he would bring everything together under Christ, as head, everything in the heavens and everything on earth.

I go to my place of prayer and allow my attention to settle on my surroundings.
What do I notice around me and within me?

How am I feeling? What thoughts come into my mind?

I allow myself to become still.

Perhaps I follow the rhythm of my breathing; the breath that gives me life and fills my being.

From these moments of awareness, I come into the presence of God.

I slowly read the passage, letting each word touch my being.

If I notice a particular word or phrase, I let these words become the focus of my prayer. What has drawn me to these words?

How do they relate to the events of my life, and the longing of my heart?

I may choose to talk freely to God about my deepest longings, or I may simply stay in silence in the presence of God who has chosen me.

How do I respond to being chosen in Christ?

How might I deepen my relationship with Christ?

When I feel ready, I thank God in my own words for the blessings in my life, and close my prayer slowly, saying:

*Blessed be God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
who has blessed us with all the spiritual blessings of heaven in Christ.*

GOSPEL MARK 6: 7-13

Jesus summoned the Twelve and began to send them out in pairs giving them authority over the unclean spirits. And he instructed them to take nothing for the journey except a staff—no bread, no haversack, no coppers for their purses. They were to wear sandals but, he added, ‘Do not take a spare tunic.’ And he said to them, ‘If you enter a house anywhere, stay there until you leave the district. And if any place does not welcome you and people refuse to listen to you, as you walk away shake off the dust from under your feet as a sign to them.’ So they set off to preach repentance; and they cast out many devils, and anointed many sick people with oil and cured them.

Before I reflect on the Gospel, I continue to ponder the blessings in my life.
Holding these gently in my mind, I slowly prepare to pray with this text.

I allow my mind to become still in whatever way suits me best.

Reading slowly and prayerfully, I use my imagination to enter into the scene.
How do I imagine Jesus gathering his beloved disciples together to send them out into the villages and towns of Palestine?

It may help me to enter more deeply into the Gospel if I imagine being among the Twelve.

How do I feel setting off without Jesus, with so little for the journey?
Am I excited ... or anxious ... or ...?

Do I feel ready for the tasks that lie ahead of me?

I return to the Gospel, and this time maybe I am drawn to reflect on my own life.

Where is Jesus sending me?

To whom am I called to bring the Good News?

Who are the people around me, or what situations am I aware of, that are in need of the healing presence of Christ?

How might I bring that presence to them?

I spend some time talking with Jesus about how this Gospel has touched me.

I draw my prayer to a close by slowly praying *Our Father* ...

