

Serving Berlin's English-speaking Catholic Community since 1957



## ***Catholic Community***

### **Member of the English-Speaking Mission**

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**Our Mission Statement:** The All Saints Catholic Community is a fully integrated, multicultural community with English as its unifying language. It is an open, warm, welcoming, inclusive community that prays together and celebrates its unity in diversity.

## **July 19, 2015 Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time**

**Readings (*Missalette* p 33 et seq.): Jer 23:1-6 • Ps 23:1-6 • Eph 2:13-18 • Mk 6:30-34**

**Celebrant: Fr Wolfgang Felber SJ**

**Amos, a person thrown out of organized religion, was the messenger of God's will**

Even if you do not know the Bible too well, you will quickly discover that a) prophets have problems with religious leaders and that b) religious leaders have problems with prophets.

Last Sunday's **first reading** from the prophet Amos (7:12-15) describes a classic confrontation between the two, between the prophet and the religious leader. In the Bible, recognizing prophets and listening to prophets is the most acceptable way of finding out God's will in one's life. Religious and civil leaders often do not like what God has to say to his people. So, religious and civil leaders eventually developed a method to circumvent this process of listening to God's word.

Kings and priests created a system of shrine and court prophets: Shrine and court prophets were people on the payroll of the kings and priests. Kings and priest regularly consulted these prophets to find out Yahweh's will for them. These shrine and court prophets "ate at the table of the king or of the priest" – no wonder that their oracles almost always were what their employers wanted to hear.

That is part of the background for the **Amaziah-Amos** encounter. Bethel's high priest Amaziah is trying to rid his shrine of its worst critic. Amos bothers him too much. Amos not only uncovered the religious superficiality of such holy places, he insisted its clientele stay away. Everyone, including Amaziah, heard Amos' sarcastic command some chapters before: "*Come to Bethel and sin!*"

No wonder Amaziah, the priest, is so determined to rid Bethel of Amos. Amos is the biggest threat to him and to the shrine religion Amaziah personifies. That's why Amos responds with the unbelievable statement, "*I am no prophet!*" It doesn't mean what it implies. Amos is simply reminding Amaziah that he is not *his* prophet.

Do you remember the words of the reading: "*The Lord* (not Amaziah) took me from following the flock and said to me, 'Go, prophesy to my people Israel!'" The most

ridiculous part of Amaziah's tirade is his proposal, "*Earn your bread prophesying (in Judah)*!"

One of the rules for distinguishing real prophets from false prophets revolves around the fact that real prophets never profit from prophesying. They never do it for money. Who in their right mind would pay someone like a prophet – that is, pay a prophet for telling them things they don't want to hear, things they had stopped their own consciences from telling them? Over the years they had become deaf to their consciences. Prophets are known for their next-to-poverty lifestyles. Religious leaders who live a wealthy life will not dare tell us about God's will; it would clash with their own behavior.

Let us come to the gospel according to **Mark** (6,7-13): Jesus, the prophet, naturally commands those who carry on his ministry to imitate his simple lifestyle. Only those who do will give credibility to the message they proclaim. "*He instructed them to take nothing for the journey but a walking stick - no food, no sack, no money in their belts ... not (even) a second tunic.*" Neither were they to shop around for goods or food in town. "*Whenever you enter a house, stay there until you leave,*" we might add: *no matter how uncomfortable the bed or lousy the food.*"

The disciple of Paul who wrote the letter to the **Ephesians** (Eph 3,7) reminds his community where real wealth is to be found. The translation for the liturgy is: "*In Jesus we have redemption by his blood, the forgiveness of transgressions in accord with the riches of his grace that he lavished upon us*" or in a different, more comprehensible translation: "*God is so rich in kindness that he purchased our freedom through the blood of his Son, and our sins are forgiven.*" Those who bring that kind of treasure to the surface will truly understand God's will, God's plan for them.

Things really haven't changed much over the last 2.700 years. When anyone claims to be God's mouthpiece, there are a lot of questions to ask. In **Amos'** case, it was the person thrown out of organized religion who actually gave us God's will, not the representative of organized religion. This might help us to welcome men and women as prophets who are not in official churches and accept men and women as mouthpieces of God.

cf. <http://evangelist.org/main.asp?ArticleID=21677&SectionID=3&SubSectionID=28>

**Wolfgang Felber SJ**

**Welcome to All Saints! Many of us are gone for the summer and return in August but would like to welcome you to our community. A few events to look forward to:**

- **First Communion/Confirmation Parent's Meeting on Sunday, August 30th after Mass. Contact Jenny: [jgebhar@yahoo.de](mailto:jgebhar@yahoo.de)**
- **Fall Family Bazaar on Saturday, September 5th. Contact Heide: [h.doblhofer@t-online.de](mailto:h.doblhofer@t-online.de)**
- **Welcome BBQ Potluck on Sunday, September 13th after Mass. Please bring a side-dish.**

**Friends of All Saints e.V.** IBAN: DE15 3706 0193 6001 6690 18, BIC: GENODED1PAX

**Directions to All Saints:** **Subway:** U 3, Oskar-Helene-Heim (10-min. walk) or S 1, Zehlendorf, then bus. • **Bus:** Bus 285: stop Am Waldfriedhof (last stop, 2-min. walk); bus 110 or 623: stop Oskar-Helene-Heim (10-min. walk) or bus 115: stop Hüttenweg (5-min. walk). • **Car:** A115 Avus highway, Hüttenweg exit or Clayallee (<http://berlinonline.de/citymap>)