

Sunday, July 11, 2021

Lectionary 15, Year B

Introduction

When Amos reports his vision of God judging Israel for its mistreatment of the poor, he becomes a threat to the power of the priests and the king. John the Baptist also speaks truth to power, and Herod has him killed. In Herod's fear that Jesus is John returned from the dead, we may hear hope for the oppressed: all the prophets killed through the ages are alive in Jesus. We are called to witness to justice in company with them, and to proclaim God's saving love.

Confession and Forgiveness

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.

Blessed be the holy Trinity, [☩] one God,
the God of manna,
the God of miracles,
the God of mercy.

Amen.

Drawn to Christ and seeking God's abundance,
let us confess our sin.

Silence is kept for reflection.

God, our provider,
help us.

It is hard to believe there is enough to share.

**We question your ways when they differ from the ways
of the world in which we live.**

**We turn to our own understanding
rather than trusting in you.**

We take offense at your teachings and your ways.

Turn us again to you.

Where else can we turn?

**Share with us the words of eternal life
and feed us for life in the world.**

Amen.

Beloved people of God:
in Jesus, the manna from heaven,
you are fed and nourished.

By Jesus, the worker of miracles,
there is always more than enough.

Through Jesus, [☩] the bread of life,
you are shown God's mercy:
you are forgiven and loved into abundant life.

Amen.

Prayer of the Day

O God, from you come all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works. Give to us, your servants, that peace which the world cannot give, that our hearts may be set to obey your commandments; and also that we, being defended from the fear of our enemies, may live in peace and quietness, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia. May the God of our Lord Jesus Christ enlighten the eyes¹ of our hearts, that we may know the hope to which¹ God has called us. Alleluia. (Eph. 1:17-18)*

Readings and Psalm

Amos 7:7-15

The sign of the plumb line: God's judgment on Israel

Psalm 85:8-13

I will listen to what the LORD God is saying. (Ps. 85:8)

Ephesians 1:3-14

Chosen in Christ to live to the praise of God's glory

Mark 6:14-29

The death of John the Baptist

Semicontinuous First Reading and Psalm

2 Samuel 6:1-5, 12b-19

David and the house of Israel dance before the LORD

Psalm 24

Lift up your heads, O gates, that the King of glory may come in. (Ps. 24:7)

First Reading: Amos 7:7-15

Amos is not the kind of prophet attached to temples or royal courts. Rather, he is an ordinary farmer from Judah (the southern kingdom) called by God to speak to Israel (the northern kingdom). God's word of judgment through Amos conflicts with the king's court prophet Amaziah, whom Amos encounters at Bethel.

⁷This is what [the Lord GOD] showed me: the Lord was standing beside a wall built with a plumb line, with a plumb line in his hand. ⁸And the LORD said to me, "Amos, what do you see?" And I said, "A plumb line." Then the Lord said,

"See, I am setting a plumb line
in the midst of my people Israel;
I will never again pass them by;
⁹the high places of Isaac shall be made desolate,
and the sanctuaries of Israel shall be laid waste,

and I will rise against the house of Jeroboam with the sword.”

¹⁰Then Amaziah, the priest of Bethel, sent to King Jeroboam of Israel, saying, “Amos has conspired against you in the very center of the house of Israel; the land is not able to bear all his words. ¹¹For thus Amos has said,

‘Jeroboam shall die by the sword,
and Israel must go into exile
away from his land.’ ”

¹²And Amaziah said to Amos, “O seer, go, flee away to the land of Judah, earn your bread there, and prophesy there; ¹³but never again prophesy at Bethel, for it is the king’s sanctuary, and it is a temple of the kingdom.”

¹⁴Then Amos answered Amaziah, “I am no prophet, nor a prophet’s son; but I am a herdsman, and a dresser of sycamore trees, ¹⁵and the LORD took me from following the flock, and the LORD said to me, ‘Go, prophesy to my people Israel.’ ”

Psalm: Psalm 85:8-13

I will listen to what the LORD God is saying. (Ps. 85:8)

⁸I will listen to what the LORD¹ God is saying;
for you speak peace to your faithful people and to those who turn their¹ hearts to you.

⁹**Truly, your salvation is very near to¹ those who fear you,
that your glory may dwell¹ in our land. R**

¹⁰Steadfast love and faithfulness have¹ met together;
righteousness and peace have¹ kissed each other.

¹¹**Faithfulness shall spring up¹ from the earth,
and righteousness shall look¹ down from heaven.**

¹²The LORD will indeed¹ grant prosperity,
and our land will¹ yield its increase.

¹³**Righteousness shall go be-¹ fore the LORD
and shall prepare for¹ God a pathway. R**

Second Reading: Ephesians 1:3-14

In Jesus, all of God’s plans and purposes have been made known as heaven and earth are united in Christ. Through Jesus, we have been chosen as God’s children and have been promised eternal salvation.

³Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, ⁴just as he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him in love. ⁵He destined us for adoption as his children through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will, ⁶to the praise of his glorious grace that he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. ⁷In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace ⁸that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and insight ⁹he has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Christ, ¹⁰as a plan for the fullness of time, to gather up all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. ¹¹In Christ we have also obtained an inheritance, having been destined according to the purpose of him who accomplishes all things

according to his counsel and will,¹²so that we, who were the first to set our hope on Christ, might live for the praise of his glory.¹³In him you also, when you had heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and had believed in him, were marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit;¹⁴this is the pledge of our inheritance toward redemption as God's own people, to the praise of his glory.

Gospel: Mark 6:14-29

As Jesus and his disciples begin to attract attention, Mark recalls the story of John the Baptist's martyrdom. Like John, Jesus and his disciples will also suffer at the hands of those opposed to the gospel of salvation.

¹⁴King Herod heard of [the disciples' preaching,] for Jesus' name had become known. Some were saying, "John the baptizer has been raised from the dead; and for this reason these powers are at work in him."¹⁵But others said, "It is Elijah." And others said, "It is a prophet, like one of the prophets of old."¹⁶But when Herod heard of it, he said, "John, whom I beheaded, has been raised."

¹⁷For Herod himself had sent men who arrested John, bound him, and put him in prison on account of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, because Herod had married her.¹⁸For John had been telling Herod, "It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife."¹⁹And Herodias had a grudge against him, and wanted to kill him. But she could not,²⁰for Herod feared John, knowing that he was a righteous and holy man, and he protected him. When he heard him, he was greatly perplexed; and yet he liked to listen to him.²¹But an opportunity came when Herod on his birthday gave a banquet for his courtiers and officers and for the leaders of Galilee.²²When his daughter Herodias came in and danced, she pleased Herod and his guests; and the king said to the girl, "Ask me for whatever you wish, and I will give it."²³And he solemnly swore to her, "Whatever you ask me, I will give you, even half of my kingdom."²⁴She went out and said to her mother, "What should I ask for?" She replied, "The head of John the baptizer."²⁵Immediately she rushed back to the king and requested, "I want you to give me at once the head of John the Baptist on a platter."²⁶The king was deeply grieved; yet out of regard for his oaths and for the guests, he did not want to refuse her.²⁷Immediately the king sent a soldier of the guard with orders to bring John's head. He went and beheaded him in the prison,²⁸brought his head on a platter, and gave it to the girl. Then the girl gave it to her mother.²⁹When his disciples heard about it, they came and took his body, and laid it in a tomb.

Semicontinuous First Reading: 2 Samuel 6:1-5, 12b-19

The ark of the covenant, long a symbol of God's presence with Israel, is brought into Jerusalem by David. The entrance of the ark into this new capital city is marked by great rejoicing, and David himself is the chief dancer.

¹David again gathered all the chosen men of Israel, thirty thousand. ²David and all the people with him set out and went from Baale-judah, to bring up from there the ark of God, which is called by the name of the LORD of hosts who is enthroned on the cherubim. ³They carried the ark of God on a new cart, and brought it out of the house of Abinadab, which was on the hill. Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab, were driving the new cart ⁴with the ark of God; and Ahio went in front of the ark. ⁵David and all the house of Israel were dancing before the LORD with all their

might, with songs and lyres and harps and tambourines and castanets and cymbals.

^{12b}So David went and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obed-edom to the city of David with rejoicing; ¹³and when those who bore the ark of the LORD had gone six paces, he sacrificed an ox and a fatling. ¹⁴David danced before the LORD with all his might; David was girded with a linen ephod. ¹⁵So David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of the LORD with shouting, and with the sound of the trumpet.

¹⁶As the ark of the LORD came into the city of David, Michal daughter of Saul looked out of the window, and saw King David leaping and dancing before the LORD; and she despised him in her heart.

¹⁷They brought in the ark of the LORD, and set it in its place, inside the tent that David had pitched for it; and David offered burnt offerings and offerings of well-being before the LORD.

¹⁸When David had finished offering the burnt offerings and the offerings of well-being, he blessed the people in the name of the LORD of hosts, ¹⁹and distributed food among all the people, the whole multitude of Israel, both men and women, to each a cake of bread, a portion of meat, and a cake of raisins. Then all the people went back to their homes.

Semicontinuous Psalm: Psalm 24

Lift up your heads, O gates, that the King of glory may come in. (Ps. 24:7)

¹The earth is the LORD's and all ¹ that is in it,
the world and those who ¹ dwell therein.

**²For the LORD has founded it up- ¹ on the seas
and established it up- ¹ on the rivers. R**

³Who may ascend the mountain ¹ of the LORD,
and who may stand in God's ¹ holy place?

**⁴Those of innocent hands and puri- ¹ ty of heart,
who do not swear on God's being, nor do they pledge by ¹ what is false.**

⁵They shall receive blessing ¹ from the LORD
and righteousness from the God of ¹ their salvation.

**⁶Such is the generation of those who seek ¹ you, O LORD,
of those who seek your face, O ¹ God of Jacob. R**

⁷Lift up your heads, O gates; and be lifted up, O ever- ¹ lasting doors,
that the King of glory ¹ may come in.

⁸Who is this ¹ King of glory?

The LORD, strong and mighty, the LORD, might- ¹ y in battle!

⁹Lift up your heads, O gates; and be lifted up, O ever- ¹ lasting doors,
that the King of glory ¹ may come in.

¹⁰Who is this ¹ King of glory?

Truly, the LORD of hosts is the ¹ King of glory. R

Prayers of Intercession

The prayers are prepared locally for each occasion. The following examples may be adapted or used as appropriate.

Let us come before the triune God in prayer.

A brief silence.

Holy parent, you welcome your people into one family and gather all things to yourself. Bestow your grace upon your beloved church, lavish your wisdom upon us, and redeem us from our faults, that by our witness all might praise your glory. Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Awesome Creator, you steadfastly tend to the smallest of seeds and the mightiest of sycamore trees. Spring up green growth from the earth, nourish the growth of fruit, grain, and other crops, and bless the work of farmers and laborers. Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

God of the oppressed, turn the ears of those who are in power to the voices of prophets in our own day. Protect those who speak difficult truths when it is risky to do so. Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

God of strength, you are near to those who endure difficulty. Comfort all who are survivors of violence, guard the refugee and the immigrant, and protect all those who are victims of prejudice and discrimination. Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

God of love, we pray for this holy house and all those who worship here. We pray especially for those whose efforts behind the scenes often go unnoticed; for the custodian(s) and maintenance workers, for our office staff (*other positions may be named*), and for all of our volunteers. Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

We thank you, God, for the saints, martyrs, and prophets who have died in the faith (*especially Benedict of Nursia*). We remember those in this community who have recently died (*especially*). United with them as God's children, assure us that we are yours forever. Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

We lift our prayers to you, O God, trusting in your abiding grace.

Amen.

Offering Prayer

Jesus, Bread of life,
you have set this table with your very self,
and called us to the feast of plenty.
Gather what has been sown among us,
and strengthen us in this meal.
Make us to be what we receive here,
your body for the life of the world.

Amen.

Invitation to Communion

Christ has set the table with more than enough for all.
Come!

Prayer after Communion

Jesus, Bread of life,
we have received from your table
more than we could ever ask.
As you have nourished us in this meal,
now strengthen us to love the world with your own life.
In your name we pray.

Amen.

Blessing

The blessing of God,
who provides for us, feeds us, and journeys with us,
☩ be upon you now and forever.

Amen.

Dismissal

Go in peace. You are the body of Christ.

Thanks be to God.

Upcoming Commemorations

Benedict of Nursia, Abbot of Monte Cassino, died around 540

Sunday, July 11, 2021

Benedict is known as the father of the Western monastic movement. Educated in Rome, he went to live as a hermit, and eventually gathered a community of monks around him. He wrote a rule for living in monasteries that is used by Benedictines and adapted by others.

Nathan Söderblom, Bishop of Uppsala, died 1931

Monday, July 12, 2021

A winner of the Nobel Prize for peace for his efforts to unite peoples after the First World War, Söderblom also called attention to the revival of early church worship principles, and helped to lay the groundwork for the World Council of Churches.

Bartolomé de Las Casas, missionary to the Indies, died 1566

Saturday, July 17, 2021

A native of Spain, Las Casas first came to the Western hemisphere while serving in the military. Granted a large estate with indigenous slaves, he freed them after he was ordained a priest. He worked in the Caribbean and Central America to improve the lives of the native peoples.

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