

Welcome! Haere mai!

St John's Anglican Church, Otumoetai



Sunday 11 July 2020
15th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Dear Friends

Sunday's readings from Amos and the Gospel visit two royal palaces and engage with two feisty characters who had uncompromising messages for those in power. We hear stories of marital infidelity, divorce, jealousy, revenge, sordid politics, weak leadership and murder. By stark contrast, the message in the letter to the Ephesians is of the glorious and expansive vision of spiritual blessings from God.

Inspired by a vision of a plumbline set against a wall, the prophet Amos has come to the northern kingdom of Israel to proclaim the Lord's uncompromising judgement on King Jeroboam. God's anger is aimed at both spiritual and political institutions. Like most of the Old Testament prophets, Amos is a reluctant one. He knows the risks involved and would really much rather have stuck to his day job.

The Gospel takes us to another royal location: a palace and the birthday celebration of Herod Antipas. History tells us that while Herod was on his way to Rome, he stayed a guest of his half-brother Philip and had an affair with Philip's wife Herodias. Philip divorced her. Herod then married her; first getting rid of his own wife.

Antipas' affair with Herodias was unpopular with his subjects and his position was a precarious one. Herod surrounded himself with courtiers who probably kept quiet for their personal safety. John the Baptist, a prophet like Amos, would not and his denunciation of this incestuous relationship landed him in a dungeon.

In Mark's Gospel, the Baptist's death is followed by the feeding of the 5000, a foreshadowing of the Eucharist we celebrate, the sacrament which unites us to the sacrificial life and death of Christ and strengthens us to share in it and to bear what the 20th century martyr, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, called '*the cost of discipleship*'.

The passage from Ephesians is in a different register: far removed from the cruel and sordid world of politics. The writer pours out a joyous hymn of praise to God, expressing his wonder at all that God has done and would do from the beginning of creation to the fullness of time. God's saving work, now revealed in its fullness, is unfolded '*with all wisdom and insight*' and so illuminates our own understanding, both of ourselves and of God. Neither the Christians in Ephesus, nor we, nor the universe of which we are part, are accidental products of some random and impersonal process. In Christ, God's divine purpose is clear: to bring about the unity of all things, to '*gather up all things in Christ, things in heaven and things on earth*'. And the Holy Spirit is given to God's people as both a present experience in the life of the Church, and also as the promise of an even fuller experience of God's presence yet to come.

Arohanui,

Sue (Vicar)

WORSHIP THIS SUNDAY: 11th JULY 2021

Sentence

Who shall stand in the Lord's holy place? Those who have clean hands and pure hearts, who do not lift up their hands to what is false.

Psalms 24:3-4

Collect

**Living God,
the prophets faithfully served you,
fearlessly speaking your truth.
Grant us courage to follow their example,
and witness to your truth,
so that we might live lives worthy of your calling.**

**Through Jesus Christ our Liberator,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.
Amen**

1st Reading *Amos 7.7-15*

2nd Reading *Ephesians 1.3-14*

Gospel *Mark 6.14-29*

Prayers of the People

Today we pray for Stamp Volunteers at Anglican Missions and for the people of the Gisborne parish and their clergy.

We pray for those in need, especially those who have asked for our prayers: Bridget, Mike, Annaliese, Colin.

We pray for the recently departed: Richard McLaren.

AAW SOUP & ROLLS LUNCH

Ladies of the parish are invited to the AAW Soup and Rolls lunch to be held at 12 noon on Tuesday 13 July. The cost is \$10 per person. Raffles will be available.

This Week Beginning: 12th July

Monday	9.00 am	Walking Group
Tuesday	12.00 pm	AAW Lunch
Wednesday	10.00 am 2.00 pm	Mid-week Eucharist SAYGo in the Hall
Op Shop	10.00 am - 4.00 pm	Monday to Friday (ph. 576 2422)
Playgroup	9.30 - 11.30 am	Closed for school holidays
Toy Library	9.30 - 11.30 am	Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday

Services for Sunday 18th July – OT16

8.30 am Holy Eucharist
10.00 am Holy Eucharist

Contact Us

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