

## **Homily For Friday of the 13th Week of Ordinary Time - Year II**

### **St Peter's 8:30am Mass - July 1, 2022**

**Amos 8:4-12** "I will turn your feasts into mourning and your songs into lamentation, as for an only son."

**Psalms 119:2,10,20,30,40,131** "With open mouth I pant, because I long for your commandments."

**Matthew 9:9-13** "I have come to call not the righteous but sinners."

### **I Love Your Law, O Lord**

#### **Introduction**

Happy Canada Day. I hope it is a good one for you. I think we still have people who join our daily live stream from all over Canada and the world. On behalf of Fr. Jonathan, the pastor of this parish of St. Peter's in Calgary, Alberta, Canada, I wish everyone a day of peace, a day of comfort in your sorrows, and gratitude for your gifts. We always have the gift of faith for which to thank God. We always have the gift of God's mercy, which is his word, which is Jesus Christ, the redeemer and saviour.

#### **Amos**

People of faith know that the Sacred Scriptures are not just stories from the past. They are present reminders of the history of God's saving action since man and woman fell from intimacy with God through pride and disobedience.

When we read the ancient prophecies of Amos to the Israelites, it is as if the intervening time has entirely disappeared and we are listening to prophetic words directly to us as a nation and as individuals. On this anniversary of the nationhood of our country, the ancient scriptures ask us to listen to God's word as living and active at this very moment, this time of trouble.

Amos speaks uncomfortable words to the nation of Israel. The High Priest tells him to go away. They don't want to hear such things. We might add that we don't either. The nation of Israel cannot endure his words against the injustice, the idolatry, and the sexual immorality of the day. No one likes to hear about sin and its judgment.

Amos promises that there will be a day of judgment. It will be a famine, not of food but of hearing the word of the Lord. When the people of God reject, then ignore, his word, he withdraws it so it will not be profaned, made ordinary and trampled upon. He withdraws his presence. In one psalm it says: They would not listen to my voice, so I abandoned them to follow their own designs. The punishment is to allow people to fall deeply into sin which, in the case of Israel, leads to the catastrophic loss of freedom.

## **Psalm**

The people had psalm 119 to pray but they were not following what it calls for. This is a most remarkable psalm. We tend to gravitate to those psalms which express God's mercy and love and protection, and rightly so. How can we not be moved by psalm 23 and the declaration that God walks with us in our darkest moments and places. But this psalm today is a powerful antidote to the sickness that comes with a loss of faith. I think if I prayed this psalm every day, I would come to love God more. It expresses repeatedly the love of God's commandments.

The psalm repeats five different words for God's law. Today's passage has four of them. Happy are those who keep the decrees of the Lord, who seek him with their whole heart. My soul is consumed with longing for your ordinances. I have chosen the way of faithfulness. I have longed for you precepts. With open mouth I pant, because I long for you commandments.

On this Canada Day, we are at a point where we have never been so confused about what law to follow. When nations make laws, even when they are trying to make good laws, if they do so without longing for God's precepts, ultimately justice and happiness will be more and more difficult to achieve.

In Amos's day, God withdrew his word so that it would not be trampled underfoot. God will not allow his holy name and his word to be profaned, to be made ordinary. He will take it away.

## **Matthew**

As we often hear, in Jesus' day, tax collectors were associated with sinners. They were traitors to their people for collecting taxes for the Romans, often collecting more than was required. Jesus calling Matthew was a huge surprise. But Christ came for those who were not upright, not for those who think they are. As St. Paul later said, "For all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God."

Jesus goes to Matthew's house for a meal. Table fellowship expressed covenant solidarity. What kind of teacher would do such a thing? Jesus answers that it is his mission to forgive sins by going to sinners, just as a doctor might make a house call. This is what the merciful do.

In our day, it seems that there is still some readiness to receive God's word. This word has become a person in Jesus Christ. He comes to call sinners and to sit with sinners. Even today, Jesus invites us to the table, to participate in his sacrifice, but also to sit down to table fellowship with him in a covenant meal. Our task here is to admit that we need him, that we know we are sinners who want to be righteous but need Jesus, the word of God.

## **Conclusion/Call to Action**

Amos is still calling out for justice and a return to the Lord. The psalmist is still proclaiming a love, a longing, a panting for the decrees, the precepts, the commandments of the Lord. Jesus is still inviting me to dine with him. In preparation for the meal he desires to eat with me, I hear him ask me to change my life in some way, so that I might hear him better.

On this national feast day, may I join Matthew in following Jesus without hesitation, and so join Jesus, the Lord of life and love, in the great work of transforming a nation into a godly people, full of mercy, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.

## **Key Passages**

**Entrance Antiphon:** *The Lord is my light and my salvation. Whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life. Whom should I dread?*

**Collect:** *O God, grant that we may, at your prompting, discern what is right and by your guidance do it.*

**Amos:** *Hear this, you that trample on the needy, and bring to ruin the poor of the land, saying, "When will the Sabbath be over so that we may offer wheat for sale? We will practice deceit with false balances, buying the poor for silver and the needy for a pair of sandals. On that day, says the Lord God, I will turn your feasts into mourning, and all your songs into lamentation. Like the mourning for an only son, and a bitter day. The time is surely coming, says the Lord God, when I will send a famine of hearing the words of the Lord. They shall run to and fro, seeking the word of the Lord, but they shall not find it.*

**Psalms:** *No one lives on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God. Happy are those who keep the decrees of the Lord, who seek him with their whole heart. My soul is consumed with longing for your ordinances. I have chosen the way of faithfulness. I have longed for your precepts. With open mouth I pant, because I long for your commandments.*

**Matthew:** *Jesus saw a man called Matthew sitting at the tax booth, and he said to him, "Follow me." And Matthew got up and followed him. As Jesus sat at dinner many tax collectors and sinners came and were sitting with him and his disciples. The Pharisees said to his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?" Jesus answered them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick do. Go and learn what this means, "I desire mercy, not sacrifice. For I have come to call not the righteous but sinners."*