

Father Soprano

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This Sunday's readings continue the theme of the hazards of being a prophet. Unarmed disciples are sent out by Jesus with only authority over unclean spirits – the forces of sin, sickness, or death. This proves to be more valuable than any material provisions, and their mission depends on this... not their success.

Did you hear of Amos: ill prepared as he was, with his hostile reception? He was minding his own business, but God sent him to deliver a very unwelcomed message. The point: rely solely on God.

How often do we seem to be in the midst of a task for which we are completely unprepared?

We are living in days when to be Christian is socially unacceptable. It is not easy to be a faithful Christian and witness to the truth of the Gospels. There are costs of discipleship, and for some, too costly to bear.

Nominal Christians might get by: undetected, but for just a while. For example, say you believe in what the church teaches, but are silent about them in your conversation. A Christian is one who makes it clear that he or she is not ashamed and must be prepared to take risks and make sacrifices in our talk and in our being.

The saving message of the Gospel of Jesus includes the teachings of his church on the profound dignity of the human person and the nature of marriage as the conjugal bond – one flesh in union. Believing this is a crucial part of the Gospels.

These teachings are supported by the Gospels. It requires belief and affirmation. It is not optional or dispensable.

To be authentic witnesses to the Gospels is to proclaim these truths among the rest. St. John Paul II said: "The Gospel is the gospel of life. It is the gospel of family life. These integral dimensions, when lived, demonstrate a powerful force against the currents of today's thoughts in our society."

Remember the words of Jesus Christ: anyone who wants to be His disciple must take up his cross and follow Him.

There may have been times in our life when we grew comfortable, forgetful of Gospel values or even worse, forgetful of Gospel truths. But there is no ignoring that these times and people will challenge our beliefs. The help we have received at our Baptism can provide the strength needed – it helped the first disciples, and it will help us. On our feet, let us ask for this renewal.