

# CONNECT! SUNDAY REFLECTION

15th Sunday in Ordinary Time | For Sunday, July 11, 2021

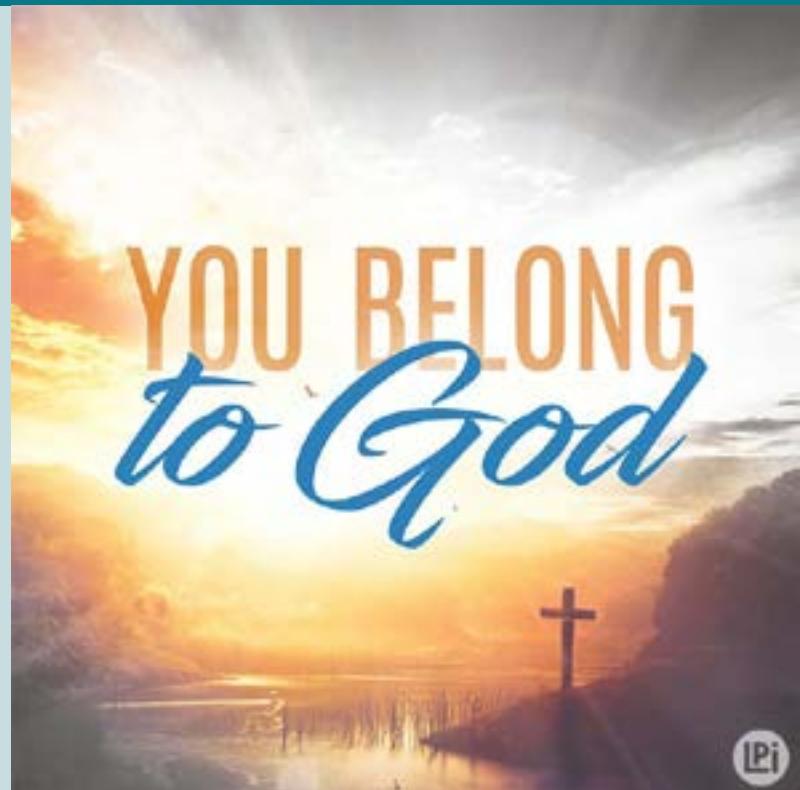
## A Possession on a Journey

Written by Colleen Jurkiewicz Dorman

**Amos 7:12-15**

**Ephesians 1:3-14 or 1:3-10**

**Mark 6:7-13**



*"He instructed them to take nothing for the journey but a walking stick—no food, no sack, no money in their belts."*

I am the mother of young children, so that means I am a packer. I am a maker of lists and a checker of inventory. I may not be organized, but I am prepared. Take a dive into my messy purse and my even messier minivan, and you will find the stores of a Doomsday prepper. I have bandages, I have water bottles, I have snacks, I have sunscreen, I have hairbands, I have pepper spray — I even have one of those things that breaks the window of a car and slices the seatbelts in case you drive off a bridge and your vehicle becomes submerged in water. I. Am. Ready.

That's why this week's Gospel sometimes makes me want to tear my hair out. Take nothing for the journey but a walking stick? Are you insane? No food? No pepper spray? No second tunic? What if we're beset by marauders? What is a walking stick going to do? The whole idea horrifies me.

It horrifies me because I spend far too much of my life thinking that I actually *have* the ability to be prepared — that all my lists and packing give me control. Ah, control — it can

be a beautiful thing, sometimes. It's important to have control when you are shepherding small children to and from activities. It's important to have control when there is a global pandemic and you are the designated family mask-keeper, and as you are pulling out of the driveway for church every weekend your husband, without fail, turns to you and says, "You've got my mask and the hand sanitizer, right?"

But control can also be a dangerous illusion, because, of course, as much as we try to tell ourselves otherwise, really *don't* have it — not when it comes to anything meaningful.

We have been sent on the journey with no food, no sack, and no money in our belts. We have been given sandals to guard our steps, and a walking stick upon which to lean when the road seems too long.

The second reading today beautifully describes us as "God's possession," which is such a lovely thought, especially for those of us who are almost pathologically self-reliant. A possession cannot care for itself; its entire existence relies on its possessor. Likewise, the first reading gives us the image of Amos, being ejected from the Temple at Bethel by Amaziah the priest. What does Amos do? In essence, he tells Amaziah that he is but God's possession, walking the path laid before him by God, equipped only with what God has given him for the work. And he shakes the dust from his feet.

I can control the number of band-aids I have in my purse; I cannot control whether or not my children are injured. I can control the masks we wear in public; I cannot control COVID-19. I can control my behavior, my faithfulness to God's laws, and my public witness to the Gospel message; I cannot control whether or not those things bring anyone closer to Christ, or simply lead them to reject me.

## PRAYER

Lord, let me remember always  
that I am your possession.  
Let me rejoice in my vulnerability,  
as it reveals your strength.  
Let me love my unpreparedness for pain,  
for sorrow, for failure and for disappointment,  
as it reveals your providence.  
Let me set my eyes on the road ahead  
without fear or trepidation,  
prepared to shake the dust from my feet.

I can get caught up in this lack of control, and let it break my heart — or I can remember that I am but God's possession, walking the path set out for me, with precisely the provisions I need.

Colleen Jurkiewicz Dorman