

Sunday 14th (C) in Ordinary Time

Gospel text (Lk 10,1-12.17-20): The Lord appointed seventy-two other disciples and sent them two by two ahead of him to every town and place, where He himself was to go. And He said to them, «The harvest is rich, but the workers are few. So you must ask the Lord of the harvest to send workers to his harvest. Courage! I am sending you like lambs among wolves. Set off without purse or bag or sandals; and do not stop at the homes of those you know.

Whatever house you enter, first bless them saying: ‘Peace to this house’. If a friend of peace lives there, the peace shall rest upon that person. But if not, the blessing will return to you. Stay in that house eating and drinking at their table, for the worker deserves to be paid. Do not move from house to house.

»When they welcome you in any town, eat what they offer you.

Heal the sick who are there and say to them: ‘The kingdom of God has drawn near to you’. But in any town where you are not welcome, go to the marketplace and proclaim: ‘Even the dust of your town that clings to our feet, we wipe off and leave with you. But know and be sure that the kingdom of God had come to you’. I tell you that on the Judgment Day it will be better for Sodom than for this town».

The seventy-two disciples returned full of joy. They said, «Lord, even the demons obeyed us when we called on your name». Then Jesus replied, «I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. You see, I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the Enemy, so that nothing will harm you. Nevertheless, don't rejoice because the evil spirits submit to you; rejoice rather that your names are written in heaven».

«Go on your way!»

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Today, we look at some who, in the crowd, have sought to come to Jesus Christ. He is talking while watching the fields full of ears: "The harvest is abundant but the laborers are few; so ask the master of the harvest to send out laborers for his harvest" (Lk 10:2). Suddenly, looking onto them, straight in the eyes, he points out a few, one by one: you, and you and you. Up to seventy two...

Astonished, they hear him say go, two by two, into every town and places where He will go. Perhaps some have answered: 'But, Lord, I only came to hear you, because it's so beautiful what you are saying!

The Lord warns them against the dangers that lurk them. "Go on your way! I am sending you like lambs among wolves." And using custom images in the parables, he adds: "Set off without purse or bag or sandals" (Lk 10:3-4). Interpreting the expressive language of Jesus: -Put aside human means. I send you and that is enough. Even though it feels far away, stay close, I accompany you.

Unlike the Twelve, called by the Lord to remain with Him, the seventy-two then returned to their families and their work. They lived there with what they had found with Jesus: to bear witness, each in its place, just helping those to come closer to Jesus Christ.

The adventure ends well: "The seventy-two disciples returned rejoicing" (Lk 10:17). Sitting around Jesus Christ, they shared the experience of that couple of days in which they discovered the beauty of being a witness.

When considering today that distant episode, we see that it is not just an historical memory. We are taking the hint: we can be next to Christ present in the Church and worship Him in the Eucharist. Pope Francis encourages us to "bring Christ to man, and lead to an encounter with Jesus Christ, Way, Truth and Life, truly present in the Church and contemporary in every man."

«I am sending you»

Today, the Church contemplates how from those following the Lord that had been called by him, besides the Twelve, there were also numerous disciples. From all those disciples the Lord chooses seventy two for a concrete mission. He expects from them the same as from the Apostles, namely, total generosity and complete abandonment to Divine Providence.

The Second Ecumenical Vatican Council, in its decree *Apostolicam actuositatem*, reminds us that from the Baptism each Christian is called by Christ to carry out a mission. The Church, in the name of our Lord, «earnestly entreats all the laity in the Lord to answer gladly, nobly, and promptly the more urgent invitation of Christ in this hour and the impulse of the Holy Spirit. Younger persons should feel that this call has been directed to them especially and they should respond to it eagerly and generously. Through this holy synod, the Lord renews His invitation to all the laity to come closer to Him every day, recognizing that what is His is also their own, to associate themselves with Him in His saving mission. Once again He sends them into every town and place where He will come so that they may show that they are co-workers in the various forms and modes of the one apostolate of the Church, which must be constantly adapted to the new needs of our times. Ever productive as they should be in the work of the Lord, they know that their labor in Him is not in vain» (n. 33).

Christ wants to instill his disciples the apostolic boldness; this is why He says «I am sending you», to which St. John Chrysostom comments: «This should suffice to cheer you up; this would suffice to give you confidence and not be afraid of those who attack you». The boldness of the Apostles and disciples came from the certainty they had they have been chosen and sent out by the God himself. They acted as the same Peter firmly explained at the Sanedrin, in the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, «nor is there any other name under heaven given to the human race by which we are to be saved» (Acts 4:12).