

Wednesday 14th in Ordinary Time

Gospel text (Mt 10,1-7): Jesus called his twelve disciples to him and gave them authority over the unclean spirits to drive them out and to heal every disease and sickness. These are the names of the twelve apostles: first Simon, called Peter, and his brother Andrew; James, the son of Zebedee, and his brother John; Philip and Bartholomew, Thomas and Matthew, the tax collector; James, the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; Simon, the Canaanite, and Judas Iscariot, the man who would betray him. Jesus sent these twelve on mission with the instruction: «Do not visit pagan territory and do not enter a Samaritan town. Go instead to the lost sheep of the people of Israel. Go and proclaim this message: ‘The kingdom of heaven is near’».

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Today, the Gospel shows us Jesus sending his Apostles on a mission: «Jesus sent these twelve on mission with these instructions...» (Mt 10:5). The twelve make up the “Apostolic College”, that is “missionary”. The Church, in its earthly pilgrimage, is a Missionary Community, as its origin lies in the fulfillment of the mission of the Son and the Holy Spirit, following God Father's divine intentions. In the same way as Peter and the other Apostles, by institution of our Lord, constituted a single Apostolic College, the Roman Pontiff, Peter's successor, and the Bishops, successors of the Apostles, form a body which has the duty to announce the Gospel everywhere.

Among the disciples sent on mission we find those with an outstanding position, given by Christ, and a greater responsibility, such as Peter; and others, as Thaddaeus, whom we practically know nothing about; however, the Gospels, which communicate Good News, were not intended to satisfy our curiosity. On our side, we are supposed to pray for all the bishops, for the famous and for the not so famous ones, while living in communion with them: «See that you all follow the bishop as Jesus Christ follows the Father and the presbytery as you would the apostles...» (St.

Ignatious of Antioch). Jesus was not looking for cultivated people, but simply for people who were available, willing and able to follow him to the end. This means that, as a Christian, I must also feel responsible of a part of Jesus' plan of salvation. Do I keep away from evil? Do I help my fellow-men?

As their mission was just beginning, Jesus hurries to give them instructions with some limitations: «Do not visit pagan territory and do not enter a Samaritan town. Go instead to the lost sheep of the people of Israel. Go and proclaim this message: 'The kingdom of heaven is near'» (Mt 10:5-6). Today we must do what we can, with the certainty that God is calling all pagans and Samaritans in another phase of the missionary work.