Eleventh Sunday in Ordinary Time (A)

Gospel text (*Mt* 9:36—10:8): At the sight of the crowds, Jesus' heart was moved with pity for them ... Then he summoned his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits to drive them out and to cure every disease and every illness... instructing them thus, "... As you go, make this proclamation: 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.' ..."

The Apostles' succession. The apostolic College

EDITORIAL TEAM evangeli.net (based on texts by Benedict XVI)
(Città del Vaticano, Vatican)

Today, Jesus calls the Twelve, who represent the future People of God. Thanks to their faithful testimony and the one of their successors (the bishops) the word and the life of Jesus has become present in the world in a permanent way, building the living Tradition of the Church.

The succession in the episcopal role gave continuity to the Apostles ministry. The Twelve were joined in the first place by Matthias (replacing Judas Iscariot) and later by Paul, then by Barnabas and later on by others, until – in the second and third generation – the definitive configuration of the bishop´s ministry was completed. Therefore the apostolic continuity is expressed in this historical chain. And it is in this "continued succession" of the apostolic College that we can find the guarantee to the perseverance of the ecclesial community assembled "by" and "in" Christ.

- This continuity is not only an historical succession, it must be also understood in the spiritual sense: the apostolic succession in the ministry is considered as a privileged place for the action and the transmission of the Holy Spirit.