

Wednesday of the Fourteenth Week in Ordinary Time

Gospel text (Mt 10:1-7): Jesus summoned his Twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits to drive them out and to cure every disease and every illness. The names of the Twelve Apostles are these: 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 Thaddeus; Simon the Cananean, and Judas Iscariot who betrayed Jesus.

Jesus sent out these Twelve after instructing them thus, “Do not go into pagan territory or enter a Samaritan town. Go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. As you go, make this proclamation: ‘The Kingdom of heaven is at hand.’”

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Today, the Gospel shows us Jesus sending his Apostles on a mission: “Jesus sent out these Twelve after instructing them...” (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

Thaddeus, 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. Ignatius 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 go into pagan territory or enter a Samaritan town. Go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. As you go, make this proclamation: ‘The Kingdom of heaven is at hand’” (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.

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- “Let your Baptism endure as your arms; your faith as your helmet; your love as your spear; your patience as a complete panoply.” (Saint Ignatius of Antiochia)
- “We also are sent as messengers and witnesses of peace. The world has much need of us as messengers of peace!” (Francis)
- “Christ's disciples are to conform themselves to him until he is formed in them (...). We have been made like to him, died with him and risen with him.” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, N° 562)