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 disciples on a mission: "Jesus sent out these Twelve after instructing them thus" (Mt 10:5). The twelve disciples form the "Apostolic College," that is, the "missionary" College; the Church, in her earthly pilgrimage, is a missionary community, for it has its origin in the fulfillment of the mission of the Son and the Holy Spirit according to the designs of God the Father. Just as Peter and the other Apostles constitute a single Apostolic College by the Lord's institution, so the Roman Pontiff, successor of Peter, and the Bishops, successors of the Apostles, form a whole upon whom falls the duty of proclaiming the Gospel throughout the earth.

Among the disciples sent on mission, we find those to whom Christ has conferred a prominent place and greater responsibility, like Peter. Then there are others, such as Thaddaeus, about whom we know almost nothing. However, the Gospels communicate the Good News to us; they are not written to satisfy curiosity. We, for our part, must pray for all bishops, both famous and not so famous, and live in communion with them: "See that you all follow the bishop, even as Jesus Christ does the Father, and the presbytery as you would the apostles" (Saint Ignatius of Antioch). Jesus did not seek educated people, but simply those who were willing, capable of following him to the end. This teaches me that I, as a Christian, must also feel responsible for a part of Jesus' work of salvation. Do I ward off evil? Do I help my brothers and sisters?

Since the work is in its beginning stages, Jesus is quick to give a limiting order: "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 will call all pagans and Samaritans in another phase of 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, Nº 562)