Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time (B)

Gospel text (*Mk* 6:7-13): Jesus summoned the Twelve and began to send them out two by two and gave them authority over unclean spirits. He instructed them to take nothing for the journey but a walking stick— no food, no sack, no money in their belts. They were, however, to wear sandals but not a second tunic. He said to them, “Wherever you enter a house, stay there until you leave. Whatever place does not welcome you or listen to you, leave there and shake the dust off your feet in testimony against them.” So they went off and preached repentance. The Twelve drove out many demons, and they anointed with oil many who were sick and cured them.

“Jesus summoned the Twelve and began to send them out two by two”

Fr. Jordi SOTORRA i Garriga
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Today, on the Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time, we read in the Gospel that Jesus sends out the Twelve, two by two, to preach. Until now, they have accompanied the Master on the roads of Galilee, but the time has come to begin spreading the Gospel, the Good News: the news that our Father God loves us with an infinite love and has brought us to life to make us happy for all eternity. This news is for everyone. No one should be left out of the liberating teaching of Jesus, no one is excluded from God's Love. It is necessary to reach every corner of the world. We must proclaim the joy of full and universal salvation through Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who became Man for us, who died and rose again, and who is actively present in the Church.

Equipped with "authority over unclean spirits" (Mk 6:7) and with almost no baggage, the Apostles begin the Church's mission: "He instructed them to take nothing for the journey but a walking stick—no food, no sack, no money in their belts. They were, however, to wear sandals but not a second tunic" (Mk 6:8-9). The effectiveness of their evangelizing will not come from human or material influences, but from the power of God and the sincerity, faith, and personal witness of the preacher. "All the enthusiasm, energy and devotion of the evangelizers comes from that source which is the love of God, poured out into our hearts by the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Saint John Paul II).

Today, the Good News has not yet reached everyone, nor with the intensity that is needed. Conversion must be preached, and many evil spirits must be driven out.

Those of us who have received the Good News, do we appreciate it? Are we aware of it? Are we grateful? Let us feel like missionaries, sent out to preach with example —and with words if necessary— so that nobody who comes our way in this life will miss the Good News.

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- “To teach in order to lead others to faith is the task of every preacher and of each believer” (St. Thomas Aquinas)

- “Jesus’ instructions and example, with care for the sick, with caring for those who are sick in body and in spirit. It speaks of the healing of illnesses and also of driving out demons, that is, of purifying the human mind, cleansing, cleansing the eyes of the soul that are clouded by ideologies and hence cannot see God” (Benedict XVI)

- “Christ… fulfills this prophetic office, not only by the hierarchy… but also by the laity. He accordingly both establishes them as witnesses and provides them with the sense of the faith [sensus fidei] and the grace of the word” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, Nº 904)