

Tuesday of the Twenty-third Week in Ordinary Time

Gospel text (Lk 6,12-19): Jesus went out into the hills to pray, spending the whole night in prayer with God. When day came, He called his disciples to him and chose twelve of them whom He called apostles: Simon, whom He named Peter, and his brother Andrew, James and John; Philip and Bartholomew; Matthew and Thomas; James son of Alpheus and Simon called the Zealot; Judas son of James, and Judas Iscariot, who would be the traitor.

Coming down the hill with them, Jesus stood on a level place. Many of his disciples were there and a large crowd of people who had come from all parts of Judea and Jerusalem and from the coastal cities of Tyre and Sidon. They gathered to hear him and be healed of their diseases; likewise people troubled by evil spirits were healed. The entire crowd tried to touch him because of the power that went out from him and healed them all.

«Jesus went out into the hills to pray, spending the whole night in prayer with God»

Fr. Lluç TORCAL Monk of Santa Maria de Poblet

(Santa Maria de Poblet, Tarragona, Spain)

Today, I would like to center our thoughts on the first words of this Gospel: «In those days, Jesus went out into the hills to pray, spending the whole night in prayer with God» (Lk 6:12). Introductions as this one may go unnoticed in our daily reading of the Gospel, while—in fact—they are of the maximum importance. Today, Jesus, specifically and clearly tells us that the election of the twelve apostles—central decision for our Church's future life—was preceded by a full night in prayer alone, before God, his Father.

How was the Lord's prayer? What we can deduce from his life, it must have been a

prayer full of confidence in the Father, of complete surrendering to his will —«for I seek not to please myself but him who sent me» (Jn 5:30)—, of clear union to God's work of salvation. Only through this profound, long and constant prayer —supported always by the action of the Holy Spirit that, at the moment of Jesus' Incarnation, had already fallen over him in his Baptism— could the Lord receive the necessary strength and light to go on with his mission of abiding by the Father to accomplish his work of salvation for mankind. The subsequent election of the Apostles —that as St. Cyril of Alexandria says, «the same Christ affirms having given them the same mission He received from the Father»—, shows us how the rising Church was the fruit of Jesus' prayer to the Father in the Holy Spirit and, therefore, the work of the Holy Trinity. «When day came, He called his disciples to him and chose twelve of them whom He called apostles» (Lk 6:13).

If only all our life as Christians —of disciples of God— could always be immersed in prayer and led by it.