

Thursday of the Twenty-sixth Week in Ordinary Time

Gospel text (Lk 10:1-12): Jesus appointed seventy-two other disciples whom he sent ahead of him in pairs to every town and place he intended to visit. He said to them, "The harvest is abundant but the laborers are few; so ask the master of the harvest to send out laborers for his harvest. Go on your way; behold, I am sending you like lambs among wolves. Carry no money bag, no sack, no sandals; and greet no one along the way.

Into whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace to this household.' If a peaceful person lives there, your peace will rest on him; but if not, it will return to you. Stay in the same house and eat and drink what is offered to you, for the laborer deserves his payment. Do not move about from one house to another.

Whatever town you enter and they welcome you, eat what is set before you, cure the sick in it and say to them, 'The Kingdom of God is at hand for you.' Whatever town you enter and they do not receive you, go out into the streets and say, 'The dust of your town that clings to our feet, even that we shake off against you.' Yet know this: the Kingdom of God is at hand. I tell you, it will be more tolerable for Sodom on that day than for that town."

“Ask the master of the harvest to send out laborers for his harvest”

Fr. Ignasi NAVARRI i Benet
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Today, Jesus speaks to us of his apostolic mission. Though “Jesus appointed seventy-two other disciples whom he sent ahead” (Lk 10:1), the Gospel's proclamation is a task that «cannot be delegated to a few “specialists” (Saint John Paul II): we have all been called and we all need to feel responsible. Each one from his own place and condition. The day of our Baptism we were told: “You are Priest, Prophet and King and you will receive eternal life.” Today, more than ever before, our world needs the testimony of the Christ's followers.

"The harvest is abundant but the laborers are few" (Lk 10:2): this positive interpretation of the mission is interesting. The text does not say, «there is a lot to sow and a few workers». Maybe today, we might have to speak like that, in view of the great ignorance of our society about Jesus Christ and his Church. A hopeful glance at the mission may engender optimism and illusion. Let us not be discouraged by pessimism or despair.

To start with, the mission waiting for us is, at the same time, exciting and difficult. Our mission neither can nor must pretend to force adhesion to the announcement of the Truth and of Life, but simply to hint a free attachment. Our Pope reminds us that the ideas are to be proposed not imposed.

“Carry no money bag, no sack, no sandals” (Lk 10:4): the only missionary's strength must be Christ. And, so that Christ may fill his life, the evangelizer must free himself of whatever is not Christ. Evangelic poverty is the great requisite and, at the same time, the most believable testimony the Apostle may offer while only this unselfishness can make us free.

The missionary announces peace. He is a bearer of peace because Christ, is the “Prince of Peace”. This is why, “into whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace to this household.' If a peaceful person lives there, your peace will rest on him; but if not, it will return to you” (Lk 10:5-6). Our world, our families, our personal ego, they all need Peace. This is why our mission is so urgent and exciting.

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

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“Faith comes through hearing, and what is heard is the word of Christ. The preaching of the word of God, then, is necessary for the spiritual life, just as the planting of seed is necessary for bodily life.” (Saint Lawrence of Brindisi)

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“The witness of a Christian life is the first and irreplaceable form of mission: Christ, whose mission we continue, is the ‘witness’ par excellence and the model of all Christian witness.” (Saint John Paul II)

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“The holy People of God shares also in Christ's prophetic office and it deepens its understanding and becomes Christ's witness in the midst of this world.” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, N° 785)