

Thursday of the Twenty-sixth Week in Ordinary Time

Gospel text (Lk 10,1-12): The Lord appointed seventy-two other disciples and sent them two by two ahead of him to every town and place, where he himself was to go. And He said to them, «The harvest is rich, but the workers are few. So you must ask the Lord of the harvest to send workers to his harvest. Courage! I am sending you like lambs among wolves. Set off without purse or bag or sandals; and do not stop at the homes of those you know.

»Whatever house you enter, first bless them saying: ‘Peace to this house’. If a friend of peace lives there, the peace shall rest upon that person. But if not, the blessing will return to you. Stay in that house eating and drinking at their table, for the worker deserves to be paid. Do not move from house to house.

»When they welcome you in any town, eat what they offer you. Heal the sick who are there and say to them: ‘The kingdom of God has drawn near to you’. But in any town where you are not welcome, go to the marketplace and proclaim: ‘Even the dust of your town that clings to our feet, we wipe off and leave with you. But know and be sure that the kingdom of God had come to you’. I tell you that on the Judgment Day it will be better for Sodom than for this town».

«Ask the Lord of the harvest to send workers to his harvest»

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Today, Jesus speaks to us of his apostolic mission. Though «He appointed seventy-two other disciples and sent them» (Lk 10:1), the Gospel's proclamation is a task that «cannot be delegated to a few “specialists”» (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 rich, but the workers 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.

«Set off without purse or bag or 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, «whatever house you enter, first bless them saying: ‘Peace to this house’. If a friend of peace lives there, the peace shall rest upon that person. But if not, the blessing 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.