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"

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Today, Jesus speaks to us about the apostolic mission. Although "Jesus appointed seventy-two other disciples whom he sent ahead" (Lk 10:1), the proclamation of the Gospel is a task that "cannot be delegated to a few 'specialists'" (St. John Paul II). We are all called to this mission, and we must all feel responsible for it—each of us from our own place and state in life. On the day of our Baptism, these words were spoken to us: "You are a priest, a prophet, and a king for eternal life." Today, more than ever, our world needs the witness of Christ's followers.

"The harvest is abundant but the laborers are few" (Lk 10:2). Notice the hopeful tone of this mission. The

text does not say, “There is much to sow and few to sow it.” If anything, in our society today—with such widespread ignorance of Christ and His Church—we might be tempted to speak in those terms. Yet Jesus points us toward the harvest, a vision that generates hope and joy. Let us not allow ourselves to be dragged down by pessimism or despair.

From the outset, the mission that awaits us is both exciting and challenging. The proclamation of Truth and Life—our mission—must never seek to force faith, but rather to invite a free response. As the Holy Father reminds us: ideas are proposed, not imposed.

“Carry no money bag, no sack, no sandals” (Lk 10:4). The missionary’s only strength must be Christ Himself. And in order for Christ to fill one’s whole life, the evangelizer must be emptied of everything that is not Christ. Evangelical poverty is both the great requirement and the most credible testimony a missionary can give. Only such detachment makes us truly free.

The missionary proclaims peace. He is a bearer of peace because he brings Christ, the “Prince of Peace.” That is why Jesus instructs: “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, and our very selves are in desperate need of peace. This is our mission—urgent and exhilarating.

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- “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)

- “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)

- “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, Nº 785)