

Thursday of the Fourth Week in Ordinary Time

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 from there. 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 (...). So they went off and preached repentance”

Fr. Josep VALL i Mundó
(Barcelona, Spain)

Today, the Gospel refers to the Apostles' first apostolic mission. Jesus Christ sends the Twelve to preach, to heal the sick and to prepare the ways of our definite salvation. This is the mission of the Church, and our mission, too. The II Vatican Council asserted, “Christian vocation is by its very nature a vocation to the apostolate. No baptized person can remain idle! Therefore, he who would not strive to achieve a human body and spiritual growth, would be as useless for the Church as he would be for himself.”

Gustave Thibon used to say that our world needs a “soul's supplement” to regenerate itself. Christ's doctrine is the only medicine that can cure all illnesses of the world. The world is in crisis. But, it is not just a partial decay of moral or human values: it is a crisis of everything. And the most precise term to define it would be a “crisis of soul”.

With the grace and doctrine of Jesus we Christians find ourselves in the midst of the temporal structures of humans so that we can instill life in them and guide them towards our Creator: “That the world, through the predication of the Church, by listening, it can believe, by believing, it can wait, and by waiting, it can love” (Saint Augustine). We Christians cannot elude this world. As Bernanos wrote: “We have been thrown in the middle of the dough, in the middle of the multitude, as yeast; we shall conquer again, inch by inch, the Universe that sin snatched away from us. O Lord, we shall return it to you as we received it in the morning of the world, with all its order and all its sanctity.”

The secret lies in loving the world with all our soul and in living with love the mission Jesus Christ gave the Apostles, and all of us. With words from Saint Josemaria, we can affirm “The apostolate is a love for God that is brimming with joy, with dedication to others (...). And our eagerness to spread our apostolate is the exact, adequate and necessary manifestation of our interior life.” This has to be our daily testimony amidst men and throughout all ages.

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

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“That by hearing the message of salvation the whole world may believe, by believing it may hope, and by hoping it may love.” (Saint Augustine)

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We must revive in ourselves the burning conviction of Paul, who cried out: ‘Woe to me if I do not preach the Gospel’ (1 Cor 9:16). This passion will not fail to stir in the Church a new sense of mission, which cannot be left to a group of ‘specialists’ but must involve the responsibility of all the members of the People of God.” (Saint John Paul II)

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“The duty of Christians to take part in the life of the Church impels them to act as witnesses of the Gospel and of the obligations that flow from it. This witness is a transmission of the faith in words and deeds.” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, N° 2472)