Eleventh Sunday in Ordinary Time (A)

Gospel text (*Mt* 9:36—10:8): At the sight of the crowds, Jesus' heart was moved with pity for them because they were troubled and abandoned, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is abundant but the laborers are few; so ask the master of the harvest to send out laborers for his harvest."

Then he summoned his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits to drive them out and to cure every disease and every illness. The names of the twelve apostles are these: first, Simon called Peter, and his brother Andrew; James, the son of Zebedee, and his brother John; Philip and Bartholomew, Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James, the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddeus; Simon from Cana, and Judas Iscariot who betrayed him.

Jesus sent out these twelve after instructing them thus, "Do not go into pagan territory or enter a Samaritan town. Go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. As you go, make this proclamation: 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.' Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, drive out demons. Without cost you have received; without cost you are to give."

"At the sight of the crowds, Jesus' heart was moved with pity for them because they were troubled and abandoned, like sheep without a shepherd"

Fr. Joan SERRA i Fontanet
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Today, the Gospel tells us that the Lord — seeing the people — was troubled, because they were disoriented and tired, like sheep without a shepherd (cf. Mt 9:36). The people of Israel knew very well — better than us city dwellers — what a shepherd was, and the chaos that ensued when the sheep were alone without a shepherd.

If Jesus were to come today, I believe he would repeat the same words: as there are many people who are disoriented, searching for the meaning of life. Lord, what solution do you provide to this great problem? Well, Jesus calls for prayer, chooses twelve apostles and sends them out to preach the kingdom of God.

He chose twelve Apostles! He sends these twelve men to preach: "'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.'

Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, drive out demons. Without cost you have received; without cost you are to give" (Mt 10:7-8). What the Apostles did, and what we must do, is preach the lovely person of Jesus Christ and his message of peace and love —and do so unselfishly.

We are all called to represent and serve the Church as the successors of the Apostles — not just the bishops and priests — but also, in unity with them, all the faithful. Thus, we all have this mission in the world: to heal humanity of its wounds, to guide it in its searches... Not only the bishops and priests, but also the laity: for instance, in family life —in its character of home and school of faith; at the university and in schools; in the media; in the field of healthcare world..., and every Christian in their environment of friendship and work.

Let's listen to St. Francis de Sales, who writes: "When God the Creator made all things, he commanded the plants to bring forth fruit each according to its own kind; he has likewise commanded Christians, who are the living plants of his Church, to bring forth the fruits of devotion, each one in accord with his character, his station and his calling."

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- "Christian hope sustains us to fully commit to the new evangelization and universal mission. It pushes us to pray as Jesus has taught us: 'Thy kingdom come'" (Saint John Paul II)

- "Indifference: how much harm human indifference does to those in need! And worse, the indifference of Christians!" (Francis)

- "The Church is catholic: It proclaims the totality of faith; it carries within itself and administers the fullness of the means of salvation; it is sent to all peoples; it addresses all men; it encompasses all times; 'it is, by its very nature, missionary' (Second Vatican Council)" (Catechism of the Catholic Church, No. 868)