June 13th: Memorial of Saint Anthony of Padua, Priest and Doctor of the Church

Gospel text (*Lk* 10,1-9): 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’».

«Say to them: ‘The kingdom of God has drawn near to you’»

Fr. Josep Mª MASSANA i Mola OFM
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Today day of St. Anthony, we can see in the Gospel how Jesus, in a simple and evangelical way, sent 72 disciples to preach. First, this preaching has to be peaceful and pacifying: "Peace to this House" (Lk 10:5). And, secondly, the subject of the preaching must be the announcement of the Kingdom: «The Kingdom of

God has come near you» (Lk 10:9). This is how Jesus preached with his word, his parables and all his life.

Anthony was a great preacher and he announced the Kingdom in this evangelical way; and he did it from his deep awareness, meditated and lived, of the Gospel. St. Francis wrote him a letter asking him to teach theology to the young friars, while also instructing them as to how they should go about their preaching when going around the world. He said to them: «your preaching must be done with the words given by the Holy Spirit, not those of your own. The word is alive when the deeds speak. «Fewer words, please, and let your deeds speak».

Pope Francis also gave recently a similar guidance to some new priests, the day of their ordination, and he recommended them this: «Read and meditate on the word of the Lord, see that you believe what you read, that you teach what you believe, and that you practice what you teach». You cannot say more with fewer words!

We, Christians, are sent by Jesus, as those 72 disciples were sent, with the mission to preach the peace and announce the Kingdom: let us do it, as St. Anthony says, with a good understanding of the Gospel, with the words of the Holy Spirit, and above all with our own deeds. And as the Pope just tells us: let us read and meditate the Gospel and let us teach by living what we have meditated and read. And let us not forget that the Gospel that we meditate, preach and live by with our deeds, is the same person of Jesus.