June 11th: Memorial of Saint Barnabas, Apostle

Gospel text (*Mt* 10:7-13): Jesus said to his Apostles: "As you go, make this proclamation: 'The Kingdom of heaven is at hand.' Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, drive out demons. Without cost you have received; without cost you are to give. Do not take gold or silver or copper for your belts; no sack for the journey, or a second tunic, or sandals, or walking stick. The laborer deserves his keep. Whatever town or village you enter, look for a worthy person in it, and stay there until you leave. As you enter a house, wish it peace. If the house is worthy, let your peace come upon it; if not, let your peace return to you."

"As you go, make this proclamation: 'The Kingdom of heaven is at hand.' Cure the sick, raise the dead..."

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Today we celebrate the Apostle Joseph, "also named by the apostles Barnabas (which is translated ('son of encouragement')" (Acts 4:36). From the beginning, he was generous: He "sold a piece of property that he owned, then brought the money and put it at the feet of the apostles" (Acts 4:37). He brought Saint Paul to the Apostles, when everyone was afraid of him, and with him he opened the apostolate to all peoples. First, in Antioch, where he "encouraged them all to remain faithful to the Lord in firmness of heart, for he was a good man, filled with the holy Spirit and faith. And a large number of people was added to the Lord" (Acts 11:23-24). His apostolic zeal was exemplary, putting into practice the Master's command: "As you go, make this proclamation: 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.'" (Mt 10:7).

"Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them" (Acts 13:2), the Holy Spirit proclaimed. They went to Cyprus and Asia Minor and suffered greatly for the Lord. They also had their differences and separated because of Mark, who abandoned them mid-journey, and Paul no longer accepted him on the next one. But Barnabas knew how to trust him, and we will later see Mark as a great collaborator of Peter and Paul.

Let us learn not to label people forever, for "souls, like good wine, improve with time" (Saint Josemaría), when they are sustained with trust and are loved, since "nothing can be loved unless it is known" (Saint Augustine).

When we see someone falter or retreat, let us persevere like Barnabas, a nickname that also means "mighty man" and "one who encourages and inspires." These are characteristics we need today. Therefore,

we turn to the Lord with the words of the collect: "Grant that the Gospel of Christ, which he [Barnabas] strenuously preached, may be faithfully proclaimed by word and by deed."

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- “The Lord called his disciples the salt of the earth because they seasoned with heavenly wisdom the hearts of men rendered insipid by the devil.” (Saint Chromatius)

- “At the time of the first conversions of the Gentiles, therefore, Barnabas realized that Saul's hour had come. As Paul had retired to his native town of Tarsus, he went there to look for him. Thus, at that important moment, Barnabas, as it were, restored Paul to the Church” (Benedict XVI)

- “Do not live entirely isolated, having retreated into yourselves, as if you were already justified, but gather instead to seek the common good together (Ep. Barnabae).” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, No. 1905)