

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...”

Fr. Jordi POU i Sabater
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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). He was generous from the beginning: 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 St. Paul to the Apostles, who were afraid of him and, with Paul, they opened the apostolate to all peoples. First, in Antioch: “When he arrived and saw the grace of God, he rejoiced and 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 an example, as he was putting into practice the Master's commandment: “As you go, make this proclamation: ‘The Kingdom of heaven is at hand’” (Mt 10:7).

The Holy Spirit proclaimed: “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them” (Acts 13:2). They went to Cyprus and Asia Minor, and suffered greatly for their Lord. They had differences of opinion and even parted

because of Mark, who quit half of the way, and Paul did not accept him on their next journey; but Barnabas knew how to trust Mark and, later on, we will see him as a great collaborator of Peter and Paul.

Let us learn not to classify people into boxes, for “souls, like good wine, improve with time” (St. Josemaria Escrivá), when we support them with our confidence and we love them, for “nobody can be really known unless we love him” (St. Augustine).

When we see somebody weakening or retreating, let us persevere just as Barnabas did, whose namesake also means “brave man”, and “he who encourages and enthuses”. These are characteristics very much in need of today. This is why we turn to the Lord with the words of the Collect prayer: “God our Father, you filled St. Barnabas with faith and the Holy Spirit and sent him to convert the nations. Help us to proclaim the Gospel by word and deed.”

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

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“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)

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“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)

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“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)