October 28th: Feast of Saints Simon and Jude, Apostles

Gospel text (*Lk* 6:12-19): Jesus went up to the mountain to pray, and he spent the night in prayer to God. When day came, he called his disciples to himself, and from them he chose Twelve, whom he also named Apostles: Simon, whom he named Peter, and his brother Andrew, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus, Simon who was called a Zealot, and Judas the son of James, and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor.
And he came down with them and stood on a stretch of level ground. A great crowd of his disciples and a large number of the people from all Judea and Jerusalem and the coastal region of Tyre and Sidon came to hear him and to be healed of their diseases; and even those who were tormented by unclean spirits were cured. Everyone in the crowd sought to touch him because power came forth from him and healed them all.

"Jesus went up to the mountain to pray"

Fr. Albert TAULÉ i Viñas
(Barcelona, Spain)

Today, we may contemplate a full day in the life of Jesus. A life with two clear complimentary forces: prayer and action. If, as Christians, we are to imitate Jesus' life, we cannot miss either of these two dimensions. All Christians have certain moments for praying and certain others for action, even those who are consecrated to a contemplative life. The length of time for each one may, of course, vary. We can see that even friars and nuns in closed orders devote a good part of their time to some kind of work. On the other hand, those of us who are more secular, if we wish to imitate Jesus, we should not carry out an important activity without first covering it with prayer. St. Jerome says: "Even though the Apostle ordered us to pray all the time... we must devote to this exercise certain previously determined hours."

Did Jesus need these lengthy hours of lonely prayer, when everyone else was asleep? Theologians study the psychology of Jesus man: up to which point had He direct access to Divinity and up to which point was He "one who has similarly been tested in every way, yet without sin" (He 4:15). Insofar as we consider Him closer to us, His praying practice will be an exceptional example for us.

Once our praying is well-established, all that remains is for us to imitate Him in action. In today's fragment, we can see Him “organizing the Church,” that is, choosing those who were to be His future evangelists, the followers of His mission on earth: “When day came, he called his disciples to himself, and from them he chose Twelve, whom he also named Apostles” (Lk 6:13). Later on, we find Him healing all types of sicknesses; the Evangelist says: “Everyone in the crowd sought to touch him because power came forth from him and healed them all.” (Lk 6:19). In order for our identification with Him to be complete, we must remain in Him so that we can bear plenty of fruit (cf. Jn 15:4). Then it may be possible that this power to heal everyone also comes forth from us.

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- "The individual human soul a temple of God this opens to us an entirely new, broad vista. The prayer life of Jesus was to be the key to understanding the prayer of the church." (Saint Teresa Benedicta of the Cross)

- "May both Simon the Cananaean and Jude Thaddeus help us to rediscover the beauty of the Christian faith ever anew and to live it without tiring, knowing how to bear a strong and at the same time peaceful witness to it." (Benedict XVI)

- "... (Jesus) prays before the decisive moments involving the mission of his apostles: at his election and call of the Twelve (cf. Lk 6:12), before Peter's confession of him as "the Christ of God," (Lk 9:18-20) and again that the faith of the chief of the Apostles may not fail when tempted (cf. Lk 22:32)..." (Catechism of the Catholic Church, n 2600)