



The Holy See

POPE FRANCIS

ANGELUS

Saint Peter's Square

Sunday, 15 July 2018

Multimedia

Dear Brothers and Sisters, Good Morning,

Today's Gospel passage (cf. Mk 6:7-13) narrates the moment Jesus sends the Twelve [Apostles] on mission. After calling each of them by name "to be with him" (Mk 3:14), listening to his words and observing his gestures of healing, he now calls them again to "send them out two by two" (6:7) to the villages he was going to visit. It is a sort of "internship" of what they would be called to do following the Resurrection of the Lord, through the power of the Holy Spirit.

The Gospel passage pauses on the *style of the missionary* which we can sum up in two points: the mission has a *centre*; the mission has a *face*.

First of all, the missionary disciple has his *centre* of reference who is Jesus himself. The narrative indicates this by using a series of verbs which have him as the subject — "He called to him"; he "began to send them"; he "gave them authority"; "he charged them", "he said to them" (vv. 7, 8, 10) —, so that the going out and working of the Twelve appears to be radiating from a centre, reaffirming the presence and work of Jesus in their missionary actions. This demonstrates that the Apostles have nothing of their own to proclaim, nor any abilities to manifest, but rather that they speak and act as "emissaries", as messengers of Jesus.

This episode of the Gospel also applies to us and not only to priests but to all baptized people called to witness to the Gospel of Christ in the various spheres of life. And for us too, this mission is authentic only in so far as its unchanging centre who is Jesus. It is not an initiative of faithful

individuals nor of groups and not even of large gatherings. It is the mission of the Church, inseparably united to her Lord. No Christian proclaims the Gospel “on his/her own”, but is only sent by the Church who received the mandate from Jesus himself. Indeed it is Baptism that makes us missionaries. A baptized person who does not feel the need to proclaim the Gospel, to proclaim Jesus, is not a good Christian.

The second characteristic of the missionary’s style is, so to speak, a *face*, which consists in the *poverty of means*. His accoutrement responds to a criteria of modesty. Indeed the Twelve have the order to “take nothing for their journey except a staff; no bread, no bag, no money in their belts” (6:8). The Teacher wants them to be free and unhampered, without reserves and without favours, certain only of the love of the One who sends them, strengthened only by his Word which they go to proclaim. The staff and the sandals are the gear of pilgrims because that is what the messengers of the Kingdom of God are, not omnipotent *managers*, not irreplaceable officials, not celebrities *on tour*. Let us think for example of this Diocese of which I am Bishop. Let us think about some saints from this Diocese of Rome: Saint Philip Neri, Saint Benedict Joseph Labre, Saint Alessio, Blessed Ludovica Albertoni, Saint Frances of Rome, Saint Gaspere del Bufalo and many others. They were not officials or business people, but rather humble workers of the Kingdom. This was the face they had. And to this “face” also belongs the way the message is received: it can happen that one is not welcomed or listened to (cf. v. 11). This too is poverty: the experience of failure. The experience of Jesus who was rejected and crucified anticipates the destiny of his messenger. And only if we are united to Him, who died and Rose, can we find the courage to evangelize.

May the Virgin Mary, the first disciple and missionary of the Word of God, help us to convey to the world the message of the Gospel in a humble and radiant exultation, beyond any rejection, misunderstanding or tribulation.

After the Angelus, the Holy Father added:

Dear brothers and sisters, I offer a heartfelt greeting to you all, people of Rome and pilgrims from Italy and various parts of the world: the families, the parish groups and the associations.

I especially greet the Sisters of the Most Precious Blood from Monza, the novices of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians from various countries and the Polish youth from the Diocese of Pelplin, who are attending a course of spiritual exercises in Assisi.

I wish everyone a pleasant Sunday. And please do not forget to pray for me. Enjoy your lunch.

Arrivederci!

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