

October 18, Feast of Saint Luke, Evangelist

Gospel for 18 October, feast of Saint Luke, and commentary.

Gospel (*Lk* 10:1-9)

After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others, and sent them on ahead of him, two by two, into every town and place where he himself was about to come.

And he said to them, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; pray therefore the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest. Go your way; behold, I send

you out as lambs in the midst of wolves. Carry no purse, no bag, no sandals; and salute no one on the road. Whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace be to this house!' And if a son of peace is there, your peace shall rest upon him; but if not, it shall return to you. And remain in the same house, eating and drinking what they provide, for the laborer deserves his wages; do not go from house to house. Whenever you enter a town and they receive you, eat what is set before you; heal the sick in it and say to them, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you.'"

Commentary

Today the liturgy celebrates the feast of Saint Luke, author of the third gospel and the Acts of the Apostles, and whom Saint Paul calls "the

beloved physician” (Col 4:14). Thanks to him we know some of the most central and profound teachings of our Lord, such as the parable of the prodigal son and that of the good Samaritan. Throughout his gospel, Luke makes known to us the *merciful* face of our Lord, who seeks out all men and women, Jews and Gentiles, tax collectors and sinners. At the same time, his is the gospel of *prayer*, the importance of which he emphasizes again and again (3:21; 5:16; 6:12; 9:18.28-29; 11:1; 22:41.44-45 etc.). He seems to want to make clear that the mission of searching for the lost sheep is only possible if we have a living relationship based on dialogue with our Father God.

Today’s gospel is a small example of this. It presents us with a crucial moment in the public life of Jesus, namely the handing on of his mission to his disciples. The Master, after

preparing them and giving them example, sends them out to make known to everyone the good news about the Kingdom of God. Luke tells us that Jesus wants to spread his message to the four winds and sends people out to “sow the seed” (8:5). In the previous chapter, he sent out the twelve (9:1), and then sent some other messengers (9:53). Here, another seventy-two are sent out on the mission.

This sending was the beginning of the spread of the “good aroma” of Christ that so many Christians would make a reality throughout the world. Jesus sends them out with the reminder that prayer is the way to carry out this mission, since it is God who personally calls the workers, who tells us how and when to sow the seed, and who enkindles our desire that many people may come to know the grace and joy of faith.

Saint Josemaría, when considering our mission to spread the gospel, invited us to consider: “We could see, while we talked, the lands of that continent. A light was enkindled in your eyes; your soul was filled with impatience, and thinking about those people, you said: Could it be possible that on the other side of these seas, the grace of Christ becomes ineffective? Then you answered your own question: In his infinite goodness, He wishes to use docile instruments” (*Furrow*, no. 181).

Today, on the feast of Saint Luke the Evangelist, let us ask for many workers for the harvest, who are closely united to God through prayer and fully disposed to place themselves in his hands for the mission entrusted to them.

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