

Saturday's Gospel: Workers for his Harvest

Gospel for Saturday in the First Week of Advent, and commentary.

Gospel (*Mt 9:35-38; 10:1-6-8*)

And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every disease and every infirmity. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is

plentiful, but the laborers are few; pray therefore the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.”

And he called to him his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every disease and every infirmity. “Go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And preach as you go, saying, ‘The kingdom of heaven is at hand.’ Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, cast out demons. You received without paying, give without pay.”

Commentary

As he passes through all the towns and villages, Jesus finds many sick people who need to be cured and many ears thirsty to hear the Good News of the Kingdom. Matthew tells

us that, upon seeing all these people, our Lord “had compassion on them.” And his merciful heart makes him eager to share this concern with other hearts: “pray therefore the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest,” people who can help him carry the weight of souls.

When we read these words, perhaps we think first of the need for vocations to a total self-giving in the priesthood, celibacy or consecrated life; while we will collaborate as best we can.

It is true that, in calling the Twelve, Jesus gives a special power for some specific tasks required for the life of the Church, such as the celebration of the sacraments.

But our Lord asks all the baptized to share in the mission of bringing the Gospel, through our own lives, to every corner of the world. “If we

struggle daily to become saints, each of us in our own situation in the world and through our own job or profession, in our ordinary lives, then I assure you that God will make us into instruments that can work miracles and, if necessary, miracles of the most extraordinary kind" (Saint Josemaría, *Friends of God*, no. 262).

We can ask God to help us view the world and people with his own merciful eyes. Then we will be filled with a holy compassion for those who are "harassed and helpless," and we will be able to bring God's love closer to them.

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