

Thursday's Gospel: the Harvest is Plentiful

Gospel for Thursday in the 26th Week of Ordinary Time, with commentary.

Gospel (*Lk 10:1-12*)

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.' But whenever you enter a town and they do not receive you, go into its streets and say, 'Even the dust of your town that clings to our feet, we wipe off against you; nevertheless know this, that the kingdom of God has come near.' I tell you, it shall be more tolerable on that day for Sodom than for that town."

Commentary

From those following him, Jesus chooses seventy-two to go ahead of him and announce a very specific message in the places where he will soon be going: the Kingdom of God is near.

Before sending them, he tells them that the harvest is very abundant. The Kingdom of God must reach many people, all men and women, because God “desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth” (*1 Tim 2:4*). Those who must proclaim the message are, however, few. Faced with this reality, the first thing we must do is to beg God to send more workers for his harvest.

With this teaching of Jesus, we see clearly that the protagonist of salvation is Christ, not ourselves.

Hence the most important means for enkindling faith in people's hearts are not human means, but supernatural ones. The first thing needed is not initiating apostolic activities, speaking, writing, traveling all over the world. The first thing needed is to pray. Our apostolate will be effective only if it is based on prayer, on our union of love with God.

And who are these workers who are so needed? All Christians: laity, priests, religious... We are all called by God to bring the good news of salvation to the whole world: the good news that Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah; that he has died and risen for us; that he has come to establish the Kingdom of God in the world and in the heart of every man and woman.

The Second Vatican Council made a special appeal to the laity, reminding

them that our Lord himself is inviting them “to come closer to Him every day, recognizing that what is His is also their own (*Phil 2:5*), to associate themselves with Him in His saving mission. Once again He sends them into every town and place where He will come (cf. *Lk 10:1*), so that they may show that they are co-workers in the various forms and modes of the one apostolate of the Church, which must be constantly adapted to the new needs of our times.”^[1]

^[1] Second Vatican Council, Decree *Apostolicam actuositatem*, no. 33.

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