

Friday's Gospel: Christ Counts on All of Us

Gospel for Friday in the 2nd
Week of Ordinary Time, and
commentary.

Gospel (*Mk 3:13-19*)

And he went up on the mountain,
and called to him those whom he
desired; and they came to him. And
he appointed twelve, to be with him,
and to be sent out to preach and
have authority to cast out demons:
Simon whom he surnamed Peter;
James the son of Zebedee and John
the brother of James, whom he
surnamed Boanerges, that is, sons of

thunder; Andrew, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus, and Simon the Cananaean, and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him.

Commentary

Jesus' actions, besides being effective, often signify something else. Now we see him going up to a high place and calling twelve people to him. There were also twelve tribes in Israel. From these twelve tribes the new Israel, the Church, will be built. Saint Paul said that Christ is the head of the Church; in him the Church finds its unity and from him it receives life. Those twelve men are made partakers of Jesus' power. With their words they will reach people's hearts, move them to convert and to

open up to grace; with their faith they will cast out demons and heal the sick. We too are called to share in that mission. And through our faith Jesus' power will act in the hearts of the people we speak to.

Benedict XVI, in his audiences on the apostles, pointed to the great variety among them. Some are calm and thoughtful; others impetuous and vehement. We see both mature persons and youth. Fishermen and tax collectors. Simple and educated. He counts on all of them to reach every environment and speak to every type of heart. Jesus has come to call everyone. His mission is universal. Furthermore, he freely chooses us, just as the Spirit bestows his gifts as he sees fit. And all of this happens so that the body that is the Church can grow harmoniously through mutual self-giving of the members. We too are there, and that is a reason for joy and also, at the

same time, for a wonderful responsibility.

Identification with Christ is progressive. When one embarks on a path, even if the first decisive step has been taken, everything still remains to be done. A man and a woman who get married don't say to each other: "well, that's it," but rather: "well, now our story begins." And for this story to come to fruition one needs to grow every day in love, to go forward, to seek the resources that enable us to face the challenges that crop up. No one denies Christ suddenly, but rather little by little, with their decisions, deeds and omissions. Hence the need to always keep our eyes fixed on the goal, with humility and an ever-growing desire, shown in daily deeds of love.

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