

Homily – Mark 6: 7 -13
15th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B
11 July 2021, Sooeey

“Jesus called the Twelve and sent them out two by two. He gave them authority over evil spirits”.

A group of young people from different nations were discussing how they could spread the Gospel. They talked of propaganda, literature, and the various ways of disseminating the Good News in the present times. Then a girl from Africa spoke: “when we want to take Christianity to any of our villages in Africa,” she said, “we don’t send them books. Instead, we send a Christian family to live in the village, and they make the village Christian by their presence.”

The Gospel Reading of today taken from the 6th Chapter of Mark is one of the many narratives in the life of Jesus where He sends the apostles out; ‘to preach, to heal and to renew the world.’ He sends them out on mission and ministry. He sends them out to go and share with others all that He has imparted to them, all that He has taught them.

And when Jesus sends out His disciples, He seems to be pretty stingy. He doesn’t give them much: ‘a walking staff, a tunic and a pair of sandals.’ ‘No food, no money, no haversack.’ He didn’t want them to carry a

lot of extra baggage into the field. 'Pack light', He tells them. Well, they needed to know that if they did what Jesus asked of them, He would supply their needs. But beyond that walking staff, that tunic and those sandals, Jesus did give the disciples something more: 'He gave them each other.' Yes! Jesus gave the disciples each other. He had not sent them one by one as individuals. He sent them out two by two giving them each other to sustain each other in the life of discipleship in the journey of faith. And precisely in those times when we think that the Lord has given us so little, it is exactly then that He is asking us to look around and see, how much He has given us in each other. And here, in other words, He was also telling them that they don't have to go it alone. And today like the apostles, we too are called and sent to spread His word, to radiate His light.

The Korean War was raging. And a little village came under heavy artillery fire. And in the village, there stood a Catholic Church. And outside the Church, mounted on a pedestal, there was a fine statue of Christ. However, when the smoke of battle cleared away the statue had disappeared. It had been blown off its pedestal and lay in fragments on the ground. A group of American soldiers now helped the priest to dig out and collect up the bits and pieces. Carefully they helped him to put the statue together again. They found all the

pieces except the hands. And they offered to have the statue flown back to America and have the hands made for it. But, the priest refused. “I have a better idea”, said the priest. “Let’s leave it as it is without hands. And let’s write the following words on the pedestal for all passersby to see: Friend, lend me your hands”. And in that way, we may get them to see that Christ now has no hands but ours with which to raise up the fallen. He has no feet but ours to seek out the lost. He has no ears but ours to listen to the lonely. He has no tongue but ours to speak words of sympathy, of comfort, and of encouragement to those weighed down by sorrow, pain, and failure”.

Dear friends, that is our mission today. And we need to ask ourselves: ‘Do we really know the person of Christ? Do we lend Him our hands, our feet, our ears, our eyes and our tongues? And do people recognize you and me as His friends?’ Fulton J Sheen used to say: “If you are brought into the court, into the tribunal and you are accused of being a follower of Jesus Christ, will they have enough evidence to convict you?”

Jesus our Lord never hesitated to share His work with His apostles. More surprising still, the day now came when He entrusted His entire work to them. And today, we are to go out on mission and to be a people of

ministry. Yes! We are called to go out and share the Good News.

And so as we celebrate this Gospel, as we celebrate this Holy Mass, let us first of all thank God for giving us each other to support us in times of need. And let us think about the many opportunities that God has placed before us to serve one another and to care for one another in His name and in His place: ‘may be, through Christian acts of charity, or with a kind word, or with a moment to be in conversation with someone, or by merely just being there when someone perhaps is bereaved or sad and needs our cheer or consolation or support.’

Well dear Brothers and Sisters, may we have the grace to become true friends of Jesus who will lend Him our hands, our feet, our ears, our eyes and our tongues so as to be His genuine followers who will touch the lives of those whom we meet in our everyday life. And let those who see us be able to say: ‘Here is a true follower of Christ, here is a true disciple of Jesus.’ God bless you all. **Amen.**

