

My dear people of God, in today's Gospel, Jesus is sending the Apostles on a mission to rely on **Divine Providence**. Jesus instructs the disciples to leave their possessions behind in order to focus on the mission. Jesus is teaching them that the success of their ministry depends on God and not on their material value. As Paul puts it in a nice way, "we know that God makes all things work together for good of those who love him..." Romans 8:28. In effect, Jesus is teaching them detachment and self-abandonment to God. In this sense, Jesus is saying to them not to think about possessions, think about serving the Lord. Jesus is not seeking half-hearted followers, but only those who have the desire to wholeheartedly embrace him.

To be a disciple of Jesus Christ requires them to be free of any form of attachment if they are to preach the Gospel. A disciple, who has the mission of bringing the Kingdom of God to people through preaching, should not rely on human resources, but on God's providence. Whatever he does need in order to live with dignity as a herald of the Gospel, he must obtain from those who benefit from his preaching, **for the laborer deserves his upkeep** (Mt. 10:10). According to St. Bede, "the preacher should so trust in God that he is convinced that he will have everything he needs to support life, even if he cannot himself obtain it; for he should not neglect eternal things through worrying about temporal things".

As a result, Jesus tells his disciples this as he gives them instructions before sending them out to minister. He is not only giving them the mission of preaching repentance and casting out demons, he is also giving them a very basic lesson on the cost of discipleship. To be a disciple of Jesus, one must be willing to surrender all to the Lord. He is very particular about this, "**take nothing for the journey but a walking stick – no food, no sack, and no money in your belts.**" (Mk 6:8) This giving up of our heart, our will and our mind is to be done freely, for God cannot force us to surrender. He instructs, encourages and invites, but there is always the freedom to hold back.

The Evangelist Mark has added a sacramental detail to apostolic duties; namely, **anointing the sick with oil**. Oil was often used for treating wounds (cf. Is.1:6; Lk.10:34), and the apostles also used it for miraculous cure of physical illnesses by virtue of the power given them by Jesus. Hence, the use of oil as the matter of sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick, which cures wounds of the soul and even, if appropriate, bodily diseases. This sacred anointing of the sick was instituted by Christ as a true and proper sacrament of the New Testament. It is alluded to indeed by Mark, but is recommended to the faithful and promulgated by James the apostle (Jas.5:14-15; CCC.1511).

Through our Baptism and Confirmation, we are called to take on the mission of Christ. It is the mission we see in the Gospel for today as Jesus sends out the Apostles to minister two by two. It is the mission Jesus gives to the Apostles the Disciples and the Church in Matthew's Gospel at the Ascension, "**Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit...**" Mt. 28:19. This is our mission, and we prepare best for it when we surrender more and more of ourselves and welcome Christ more and more into our lives.

In conclusion dear friends, through the sacraments of Christian Initiation, we have a common vocation to **holiness and to the mission of evangelizing the world**. Let us start our evangelization ministry in our families, work places and in our schools. Although change of heart is the work of God, to tell people to change their way of life is the work of man. Let us do our upper most best to be the mouth of God and the conscience of the society and turn the wayward hearts back to God. Let us free ourselves from other attachments so that we may joyfully proclaim the Kingdom everywhere and witness the Gospel with our lives. Amen!