

14th Sunday in Ordinary Time (C): Go, you are sent!

Isaiah 66:10-14c; Psalm 66:1-3,4-5,6-7,16,20; Galatians 6:14-18; Luke 10:1-12,17-20

Dear friends and family of the Co-Cathedral of St. Theresa Church,

"Go in peace, the Mass is ended." "Thanks be to God!"

We hear this dialogue many times. This dialogue came from the dismissal rite, which we often hear at the end of the Mass. The Latin text is "Ite, missa est." It is sometimes translated as, "go forth, the Mass is ended, or go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your lives." And the response "Thanks be to God" is a translation of the Latin "Deo Gratias." However, the "Ite, missa est" literally means, "Go, it is sent or go it has been sent." It sounds like the "it" is the one being sent. It appears that way, but the "it" here means the one we have shared in the Holy Mass; of course, our Lord Jesus Christ, his love, his Body and Blood, the Word of God we have received and been fed upon, and the Holy Spirit who has filled us.

Having said this, we never leave Mass. We are sent to carry the love of God, made flesh in Jesus, to our families, relatives, friends, and others, especially those in need. Jesus himself sends us through the Church. We say, "Thanks be to God." Thank you for choosing and sending me!

Being sent is the overarching theme of the readings this Sunday.

We heard from the first reading, which is part of the oracles of Prophet Isaiah about Jerusalem. Oracles are divine wisdom spoken by the prophet to challenge, warn, or give hope to the people. Prophet Isaiah, who was present during the critical moment of Israel's history and witnessed the collapse of the northern kingdom under the attacks of the Assyrians, proclaimed the oracles. He prophesied that God would restore Jerusalem; that she would be the source of comfort and blessings for those seeking refuge under her; God promised his redeeming presence so that those who loved, mourned over her, and suffered would find life and joy in Jerusalem again (cf. Is 66:10-14).

Jerusalem is the image of the Church. God's redeeming presence is bestowed upon her through the passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus, which she recalls, realizes, and celebrates in the Holy Eucharist. She exists to give comfort and blessings to people, especially those who suffered and lost. What she is, so also all her members. We proclaim God's promise in every care we show, every gentleness we provide, every forgiveness we offer, every selfless act we render, and every charity we give.

The great commissioning of the seventy-two disciples in the gospel reflects this truth and reminds the wisdom of being sent. We have been reminded again of our faith's obvious, challenging, and at times taken for granted truths -- 1. We are sent to witness the love of God and neighbor; 2. We are sent like a lamb; 3. Jesus is the reason we are sent and the reason for our message.

We are sent to witness the love of God and neighbor. Jesus sends out the seventy-two disciples in pairs - two by two - to signify that the twin precepts of charity are indispensable for the duty of Christian preaching -- "You shalt love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. "This is the first and great commandment. "And the second is like it; you shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Mat 22:37-39). The two disciples who are sent are to witness these twin precepts in their relationship and overflows in their care for others. Our patron St. Therese said, "We must never refuse anyone, even when it costs us much pain. Think that it is Jesus who is asking you this service; how eager and friendly you will be in granting the favor requested."

We are sent as a lamb. Jesus said: "Go on your way; behold I send you as a lamb among wolves" (Lk 10:3). It is not about being sent like a lamb only to be devoured by the wolves of this world. As his disciples, we are to assume the spirit or character of the one who sent us. Saint Mother Theresa of Calcutta says this very well: "To everybody see Jesus and in everybody be Jesus." Our lives are, first and foremost, the message; our presence matters before any words of proclamation. This is a powerful reminder for all, especially the priests and bishops. Your presence is the good news.

Jesus is the reason we are sent and the reason for our message. Our Lord commanded the disciples to bring nothing on their journey -- No purses, backpacks, extra sandals. Often, baggage becomes an issue in travel, significantly when they exceed the limit. However, it is not just about not having what I want, but the practical attitude toward service- the spirit of detachment and lightheartedness — to focus on Jesus and manifest our trust in him. We are to bring a huge message about Jesus, not huge baggage. Indeed, we are told that Jesus made the disciples workers of miracles in his name; he reminded them to rejoice not of what they have done but because their names are written in heaven because of Jesus. It will be devastating if we don't find our names there!

Furthermore, St. Paul emphasizes this in the second reading; he pointed out the absolute pre-eminence of Christ and his cross as God's way to salvation and holiness. He proclaimed this with conviction: "May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world" (Gal.6:14). Like St. Paul, we are our world's living presence of the crucified and risen Christ. I hope, like him, we can say: I bear the marks of the Cross of Jesus in my body. I carry the saving grace of God in my heart.

I remember a seminarian aspiring to become a priest; his father died in an accident. He told his pain and how he was so devastated. After his father's burial, he returned to me, saying he was leaving the seminary for good. He wanted to help his mother raise his three other young siblings financially. It seemed a good decision, but I asked him: What would your mother feel? Are you not adding pain to your mother if you decide to go out? And so I suggested to tell his mother about his plan.

After two months, he returned and shared what his mother told him: It is my responsibility as a mother to take care of my children. It is not your responsibility, and you have to continue your vocation. As your mother, I will offer my life to ensure that you and my children have an education and a good life. What a wonderful mother! God sent her to her son so that her son would become a priest.

"Ite, missa est." Jesus chooses you and sends you. "Go forth, the Mass is ended." It is not simply going forth to a destination – not so much a place to go as a task to do. Or "Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life" reminds us that our task is not merely a chore we can check off from our to-do list and then get to our own business; glorifying the Lord is our business!

After the Holy Mass, today to whom you will go?

God bless you.

Fr. Manny Hewe
Pastor