

Fr. Romeo Evangelista Homily  
Sunday, July 11, 2021  
15<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time  
Cycle B

There are two important points our Lord wants us to reflect on our Gospel today.

First, on the instruction that the twelve carry out their mission by two, in pairs. The Gospel tells us that Jesus gathered them and sent them not as individuals, but as companions. We might think that on the practical level it would have been more fruitful to send them out individually so that they could cover a wider audience. And yet Jesus insists that they go out with partners, always by two and in pairs.

By sending them two by two Jesus wants to teach us that our faith always has a communal dimension. A Christian does not live out his faith alone, by himself, and deals with God out of purely personal inspirations. A Christian is always part of a believing community, untied with his brothers and sisters in faith and charity.

Consequently, our mission is also, at all times, personal but never individualistic. Our mission can bear fruit in abundance only when there is participation. The mission of the church cannot effectively be carried out by a lone ranger, say a crusading but isolated pastor, no matter how brilliant he is. It has to be pursued in the spirit of participation by all, each according to the gift that he or she has received.

I've always liked that image which says every one of us is a single-winged angel. To be able to fly back to heaven where we come from, each one of us needs the assistance of another. Today the Lord is telling us that we have to support each other. We must resist the strong temptation toward rugged individualism and indifference.

Second, on the instruction to bring along for the mission only the staff and pair of sandals. No money, no purse, no other provision for the journey. In Chapter 10 of Matthew's version, even the staff and sandals are forbidden.

What is the meaning of this seemingly impractical instruction? First of all, it may be interpreted as an invitation to deepen our trust in God's providence. Elsewhere in the Gospel Jesus says, "a worker deserves to be fed". In other words, we have here an implicit promise on the part of God. "If you work for the Kingdom, I shall take good care of you". Those who dedicate their lives to the spreading of the Good News need not worry about provisions. They will be blessed in every way, even beyond their expectations.

If you work wholeheartedly for God's Kingdom, everything will be provided for you according to your needs. And as missionaries sent by our Lord we need to always trust in His promises. For it will be the one that would lead us all to accomplish the mission entrusted to each one of us.

Amen