

Homily by Fr. Gabor for the 14th Sunday-C6 by Fr. Gabor

In today's Gospel reading we are dropped right into a situation that requires some explanation. The sending out of the 72 disciples to cure the sick and prepare a way for Jesus' missionary journey is the beginning of Jesus' global gathering work in historical proportions. He, out of love for us, not worrying about his fate on the cross, came among us to gather us back to the Father, because we strayed from Him at the time of Adam and Eve, and He wants to give us back the life that they and we were always meant to live; a close loving relationship with the Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit as the Father's children. We are not living this life in its fullness yet, and neither did the people of God when Jesus came among them. This is because they were still living in various bondages, their spiritual hands tied together and their spiritual eyes blindfolded by our spiritual enemy, just like ours today.

So in this situation Jesus gives authority to the 72 and sends them out to prepare His way, so that through their preparatory works the people are made more open in their minds and hearts to receive Jesus when He arrives, and become free to turn back to the Father with their whole hearts. Every serious work requires some preparation. There are a few important elements in this preparatory work.

1. Jesus' desire to save all His people from spiritual, emotional and physical bondages and addictions. He has the same desire for us and has given us 5 keys for it: repentance; the forgiveness of our sins, authority to cast out bad spirits, just as we heard in today's Gospel and finally the 5th key; a reminder of our true identity, namely that we are beloved children of God the Father which is in Mk 1:11 and Mt 3: 17
2. The 72's faith; they believe that Jesus can give them the power to cure the sick. They are not convinced at this point that Jesus is the Messiah, but some think He is Elijah, some He is a reincarnation of John the Baptist (see Mt 16: 13-20). It is amazing that despite looking at Jesus in this way they boldly go out to do something that they have never done before. This is about all of us; we need to believe that Jesus can work miracles today; for you and through you.
3. What should you expect when you give witness to Jesus? Welcome or rejection! Rejection, because a lot of people, including Christians think there are no more miracles today; medical science can cure almost everything, because every illness has either genetic or physiological or psychological causes. But notice that the 72 also cast out evil spirits. Why, because healing is not only about physical healing, but also about spiritual freedom; freedom from the influence of bad spirits that can tempt us into bondages, addictions, anger, resentment, unforgiveness by the way we react to hurts, attacks, threat, etc., and it is important that we are freed from those spirits as well.

So often what we are called to do is a preparatory work; to prepare the minds and hearts of each other to receive the Word of God, Jesus, before He decides to speak to that person's heart. Preaching is a preparatory work like I do today; visiting someone who needs spiritual support is also a preparatory work; sitting down with someone beside a cup of tea and listening to that person's needs and encouraging that person is also a preparatory work. Visiting the towns, going into people's house and being welcome symbolically also means taking the opportunity to talk to someone and share about the God you have experienced in your life, and if you feel welcome by the other person and he or she is willing to open his mind and heart to you then the way of the Lord is being prepared, that person will be blessed, healed or encouraged; what a joy it can be both to him or her and to you as well. This must happen everywhere, in your own family, or workplace, in the church hall after Mass, or at prayer group meetings, or at the Mums & Toddlers groups, everywhere. Instead of complaining about what you don't have, you can share and try to help each other by words that can potentially heal, comfort or encourage. Jesus didn't send out the 72 to go and complain about the Roman occupation, but to tell people that the Messiah is really alive; that He teaches us and heals us through the Holy Spirit. He is not someone to wait for to arrive in the future, but He has already arrived. We are today's 72. So don't waste time with talking about superficial things, but talk rather about what you have learnt from the Lord Jesus and what He is doing to you and for all who believe and welcome Him.