

Sunday, October 27, 2024

XXX Week in Ordinary Time - Year B

Jer 31:7-9; Ps 126; Heb 5:1-6; Mk 10:46-52

The cries of the earth, thirsting for healing, justice, sharing and peace, are heard in the cry of the blind man of the Gospel, who cries louder, twice louder. In this Missionary Month, we pray for the universal mission of proclaiming Jesus to the world, the source of life and salvation for humanity. Then, at God's invitation, we hear another cry from his disciples-missionaries: "Cry out for joy!" They call for joy and faith: "Rise up with confidence, he is calling you!" The Word of Jesus is at work throughout the world, wherever it is proclaimed and welcomed. It can heal and transform humanity in the midst of tears and suffering of every kind. It gathers and forms a people of all the saved!

Pope Francis reminds us of the reason for the joyful proclamation required of missionary disciples: And the reason? Good news, a surprise, a beautiful event? Much more, a Person: Jesus! Jesus is the joy. He is the God made man who came to us. The question, dear brothers and sisters, is therefore not whether to proclaim it, but how to proclaim it, and this "how" is joy. Either we proclaim Jesus with joy, or we do not proclaim him [...] This is why a discontent Christian, a sad Christian, a dissatisfied, or worse still, resentful or rancorous Christian, is not credible. This person will talk about Jesus but no one will believe him! [...] It is essential to keep watch over our emotions. Evangelization works in gratuitousness, because it comes from fullness, not from pressure. And when one evangelizes — one would try to do this, but it does not work — on the basis of ideologies, this is not evangelizing, this is not the Gospel. The Gospel is not an ideology. The Gospel is a proclamation, a proclamation of joy. Ideologies are cold, all of them. The Gospel has the warmth of joy. Ideologies do not know how to smile. The Gospel is a smile; it makes you smile because it touches the soul with the Good News. (Catechesis 26 The passion for evangelization)

In the present context of secularization and in a world so wounded by wars and divisions, let us respond without delay to the invitation of the Father who sent his Son to save us: "Go and invite everyone to the banquet!" (Mt 22:9) We are the witnesses who have met the Son who has destroyed death and made life shine. We are fed at the banquet that offers us his presence and his life in abundance. At the end of every banquet we are sent out in Christ's name: "Go!" With the joy of having this presence within us, we set out to be his heralds in this world, waiting for light and hope. Pope Francis continues:

The joy of having the risen Jesus. An encounter with Jesus always brings you joy, and if this does not happen to you, it is not a true encounter with Jesus.[...] Immersed in today's fast-paced and confused environment, we too in fact, may find ourselves living our faith with a subtle sense of renunciation, persuaded that the Gospel is no longer heard and no longer worth striving to proclaim. We might even be tempted by the idea of letting "others" go their own way. Instead, this is precisely the time to return to the Gospel to discover that Christ "is for ever young and a constant source of newness" (*Evangelii gaudium*, 11).

Thus, like the two at Emmaus, one returns to daily life with the enthusiasm of one who has found a treasure: they were joyful, those two, because they had found Jesus, and he changed their life. And one discovers that humanity abounds with brothers and sisters waiting for a word of hope. The Gospel is awaited even today. People of today are like people of all times: they need it. Even the civilization of programmed unbelief and institutionalized secularity; indeed, especially the society that leaves the spaces of religious meaning deserted, needs Jesus. This is the right moment for the proclamation of Jesus. Therefore, I would like to say again to everyone: “The joy of the Gospel fills the hearts and lives of all who encounter Jesus. Those who accept his offer of salvation are set free from sin, sorrow, inner emptiness and loneliness. With Christ joy is constantly born anew” (ibid., 1). Let us not forget this. (Catechesis 26 The passion for evangelization)

In the face of the wonders that God the Father has accomplished in our lives, may this Missionary Month, as it draws to a close, remind us of our mission to proclaim and witness to Jesus. Today let us also hear the invitation to be fishers of men: let us feel that we are called by Jesus in person to proclaim his Word, to bear witness to it in everyday life, to live it in justice and charity, called to “give it flesh” by tenderly caring for those who suffer. This is our mission: to become seekers of the lost, oppressed and discouraged, not to bring them ourselves, but the consolation of the Word, the disruptive proclamation of God that transforms life, to bring the joy of knowing that He is our Father and addresses each one of us, to bring the beauty of saying, “Brother, sister, God has come close to you, listen and you will find in his Word an amazing gift!” (Pope Francis, Homily, Sunday of the Word of God, 22 January 2023).

In these last days of Mission Month, remembering the theme: Invite everyone, here is a clear message to all disciples-missionaries:

Christ’s missionary disciples have always had a heartfelt concern for all persons, whatever their social or even moral status. The parable of the banquet tells us that, at the king’s orders, the servants gathered “all whom they found, both good and bad” (Mt 22:10). What is more, “the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame” (Lk 14:21), in a word, the least of our brothers and sisters, those marginalized by society, are the special guests of the king. The wedding feast of his Son that God has prepared remains always open to all, since his love for each of us is immense and unconditional. “God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have life eternal” (Jn 3:16). Everyone, every man and every woman, is invited by God to partake of his grace, which transforms and saves. One need simply say “yes” to this gratuitous divine gift, accepting it and allowing oneself be transformed by it, putting it on like a “wedding robe” (cf. Mt 22:12).