

Commentary on the Gospel for Wed, Jul 10th 2013

In today's gospel, we see Jesus sending out his closest twelve disciples to spread his message: the Kingdom of God is at hand. He sends them to do the critical work of evangelizing and healing. Drive out unclean spirits and cure every disease. He gives them "authority" over unclean spirits.

Seriously? Did he check their resumes? These are not men who are powerful leaders.

The group includes Peter, a man so afraid of getting into trouble that he eventually would lie about even knowing Jesus. James and John argued over which one of them would be remembered as the greatest of the disciples. Thomas simply could not believe that Jesus has risen from the dead until he saw it with his own eyes. Matthew was a despised tax collector. And Judas was a close friend whose name has come down through the ages as synonymous with traitor.

In our practical and logical minds we might be saying, "What was Jesus thinking? I wouldn't have hired any of them!" They were losers and outcasts, poor and powerless.

Here is where we beg for the grace to see that Jesus sees us differently than we do. We see clearly our own flaws - and more clearly everyone else's! All of us are stricken with terror and too often, that fear rules our lives. We let our egos get in the way and bicker about our importance and we doubt things we should believe. We judge those on the outside - like Matthew - and yet we are often on the outside ourselves.

And who is it that Jesus calls today to spread his word? Each one of us. He calls us through our fears and loves us when we are outcasts. He hears our doubts with his heart instead of logic and loves us all the more. Even Judas was cherished by Jesus.

So today we are sent. In all of our imperfections and in all of the ways we know we are inadequate. We are sent to heal those in our world who need healing. To forgive those who desperately need our forgiveness. To drive out the unclean spirits of jealousy, greed and anger.

Today, in all of our real world humanity, we are called by Jesus to spread the good news: The Kingdom of God is here!

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