

July 14, 2024



SENT OUT ON MISSION

By Sr. Jeanne Fallon, CSJ

Today's Gospel

Jesus summoned the Twelve and began to send them out two by two and gave them authority over unclean spirits. He instructed them to take nothing for the journey but a walking stick—no food, no sack, no money in their belts. They were, however, to wear sandals but not a second tunic. He said to them, “Wherever you enter a house, stay there until you leave. Whatever place does not welcome you or listen to you, leave there and shake the dust off your feet in testimony against them.” So they went off and preached repentance. The Twelve drove out many demons, and they anointed with oil many who were sick and cured them.

MARK 6:7-13

Reflection

The previous verses of Mark 6 tell the story of the rejection of Jesus by his own

people in his hometown of Nazareth. In today's reading, Jesus, passionate to get his message out, sent out his disciples two by two to carry out his mission of teaching and healing. He ordered them to take nothing with them for the journey – only a staff to help them over the rugged terrain they would have to cross. They were to wear sandals but not a second tunic ... and bring no bread and no money in their belts. This almost sounds like the story of the Exodus, when the Israelites fled from Egypt. Jesus also gave the fledgling disciples directions how to behave if they were not welcomed. *"Shake off the dust from your feet as a testimony against them."* They were to go with nothing that would give them comfort or protection: their staff was not to be used as a weapon to defend themselves. Shaking the dust off their feet was a nonviolent gesture to show anyone who rejected them.

Imagine for a moment what it must have been like to set out with nothing. How would they survive without Jesus leading them? Jesus taught them the message of repentance they were to proclaim; he gave them power to cast out demons and oil to heal the sick, but they did not know how this would come about. These disciples were people of nonviolence sent out into a violent world. All they had with them was each other and their trust in Jesus, their Teacher.

A Present-Day Disciple

Last week in a grocery line a woman noticed my cross and said, "You are a Sister, aren't you." I answered, "Yes, I'm a Sister of St. Joseph." In the next breath she said, "I used to be Catholic, and I left for years ... how do I come back?" I saw the look in her eyes, longing to return to the community of believers she once treasured. While we exchanged contact information, I marveled that God had placed me there at that moment and that she had the courage to reach out. God's grace blessed this moment, and a woman was given new hope.



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For Pondering

The disciples in today's Gospel discovered how they were able to minister in Jesus' name and that the people they encountered were healed and set free of demons that harassed them.

- Do you remember a time when you, a present-day disciple, were able to

extend a gesture of kindness to someone and she/he responded by seeking the grace of reconciliation or forgiveness?

- As a present-day disciple, are there times when your heart burns with the passion of Jesus and you desire to reach out and offer healing or peace to a troubled person?
- Perhaps you might want to ponder the disciple's prayer below, adapted from St. Paul in Ephesians 1:17-18.

For Prayer

*May the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ
enlighten the eyes of our hearts,
that we may know what is the hope that belongs to our call.
Amen.*

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