

Sunday 19th July 2020

Call to worship

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Let us pray:

Father, we offer to you this day, all our thoughts, words and actions, all our sufferings and disappointments, and all our joys, and we unite our lives with that of your beloved Son, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Confession

Holy God, giver of light and grace, we have sinned against you and against our brothers and sisters, through ignorance, through weakness, through our own deliberate fault. We have belittled your love and betrayed your trust. We are sorry and ashamed; we repent of all our sins. In the name of Jesus Christ, please forgive us and lead us out from darkness to walk as children of light.

(Silence)

Assurance of Pardon

The almighty and merciful Lord forgives you from all your sins.

In gratitude we say:

God of love, give us a heart to love you and to love one another; through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, our Saviour.

Amen

New Testament Reading:

The Gospel of Matthew 10:5-15

⁵ These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: ‘Go nowhere among the Gentiles, and enter no town of the Samaritans, ⁶ but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. ⁷ As you go, proclaim the good news, “The kingdom of heaven has come near.” ⁸ Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons. You received without payment; give without payment. ⁹ Take no gold, or silver, or copper in your belts, ¹⁰ no bag for your journey, or two tunics, or sandals, or a staff; for labourers deserve their food. ¹¹ Whatever town or village you enter, find out who in it is worthy, and stay there until you leave. ¹² As you enter the house, greet it. ¹³ If the house is worthy, let your peace come upon it; but if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you. ¹⁴ If anyone will not welcome you or listen to your words, shake off the dust from your feet as you leave that house or town. ¹⁵ Truly I tell you; it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah on the day of judgement than for that town.

This is the word of the Lord

Reflection

Here you are. Jesus called you to be his disciple. What now? What does it mean for you today, in this time, in this space of your life?

Jesus sent his disciples to a mission. The mission was to proclaim the good news that the kingdom of heaven is now near. It is near because Jesus, God the Son, the promised Messiah was here on earth. And He came to us because there was nothing that humans could do to reverse the effects of the fall in Genesis 3. We could not go to God or do anything possible to reach God. God had to come to us – Emmanuel: God with us.

Earlier in the previous chapter Jesus looked on the crowds that came to him and He had compassion on them, because they were lost. That is the human condition when we live without God in our lives; lost, driven by the things of the world, living in darkness. We must be grateful that God loves us so much that He sent His only Son to save us from our sins and from ourselves.

In our reading today, Jesus gives authority to his disciples to cure physical and spiritual afflictions. They are to go to the people of Israel first because they are the people who had the prophecies first. In the same way, we are to nurture and grow our people in our churches and make them strong and confident of the gospel message before we send them out to deliver the good news of Christ.

Jesus calls you and sends you out. But you are not going out on your own. You are given the authority of Jesus Christ Himself. His Spirit is with us as we go out to bring the good news of God's love into the world. This is the altruistic nature of our mission: We go out to bring God's love to others because we know that He loved us before we even realised that. We are not going to just hide and keep it for ourselves. God loves you and me as much as the next person and every one deserves a chance to hear what Jesus has to say, what Jesus had done for us.

So, our mission is to bring that news that Jesus offers a reversal of the human condition. What has been broken by us, is fixed by God. Our mission is to tell each person that even though they have no faith in God, God has faith in them and is knocking on the door of their hearts, right now. That is the mission of this passage.

The miracles, done under authority of Jesus and in his name, are only a sign to show that the Kingdom of God is real and it is here.

But there is also a warning that Jesus gives us as we go out in his name. When we go from place to place proclaiming God's kingdom of peace and love, we must be aware that many will not be glad to receive you and the message you carry. They will reject you because they reject the One whom you represent. Earlier in the gospel, Jesus warned us not to put our treasure in front of those who will not appreciate it. We must discern between those who are keen to receive the message of God and those who will reject it.

As I write this for you, so many Bible passages come to my mind:

When Samuel goes to God in despair because Israel wanted a king like other people, God said to Samuel, "They are not rejecting you, they are rejecting me".

And Jesus, in John's gospel said to us that if they hated Him, they will also hate us.

Does this scare you? Being a Christian has never been easy. But this is the mission that we are called to. All of us are called to go out and bring the good news to the world. Jesus is making it clear, however, that we must trust Him to provide what we need in practical terms and (in the next passage) in spiritual terms too.

If you are confident in the mission and in the One who sent you, you don't need to be afraid. Remember, therefore, that you have been given authority from God Himself to proclaim His kingdom on earth. But you are not going by yourself, you are following in the steps of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is His mission, His Church and His people. The secret of success lies in that; to follow Jesus all the way. Do nothing and say nothing without Jesus being in it. Are you ready for the mission?

Amen

Hymn: Click [here](#) for a link to the hymn 'Guide me O Thou Great Redeemer'

Prayer of Intercession:

Dear God, creator and preserver of all, we pray for people of all sorts and conditions. Make your purpose known on earth, your saving power among the nations. We pray for the well-being of the catholic Church. So, guide and guard it by your good Spirit that all who profess and call themselves Christians may be led into the way of truth and hold the faith in the unity of the Spirit and in righteousness of life. We commend to your generous goodness all those who are in any way afflicted or distressed, in mind, body or circumstances. Comfort and relieve them according to their individual needs; give them patience under their suffering and a happy release out of all their afflictions, according to your will. All this we ask in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour.

Amen

The Lord's prayer

At the Saviour's command and formed by His divine teaching we pray together:

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen

Benediction:

The blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be with you always. Amen

Rev. Bruno Boldrini