

OCTOBER 3 2024 FATHER TOMASZ SKIBINSKI

We come today to this Gospel, which we could call the missionary Gospel, the sending of the 70. This is already significant in itself because it's not only the apostles, only the 12. Jesus entrusts the proclamation of the message to many more people. We could think about it today in that way. It is not so much just the duty, we can say, of the bishops and the priests to preach the good news. All of us are called to spread the Gospel, to be the disciples of Christ, because this is the first calling we have—to be, we can say, the bearers of Christ, to bring Christ into this world.

It is very interesting that Christ first sends them on ahead of him in pairs. Some fathers who comment on this expression say that Christ sends them in pairs because it is not, first of all, easy to do it on your own. Number two, you have someone whom you can lean on, who can support you. They also ask, how can you exercise love if there is no one beside you, around you to love? This is also for the sake of charity. That's why many saints later on, like St. Francis, for example, used to send the friars two by two so that they can help each other.

What is important is that he sent them to every town and place where he himself intended to go, and it is very important too because we are not to bring ourselves to the people or our own message. We are Christians, people of faith, first of all, for the sake of others. But we also need to remember that behind us there is Jesus Christ. Christ sends them in a sense to open the way for him; he himself wants to go.

So, maybe today, you know the people who are in need of Christ. If no one goes to them, if no one preaches to them, if no one gives them a witness of Christian life, it will be very difficult—much more difficult. I am not saying impossible, because for God, nothing is impossible, but Christ wants to reach other people through us. This is what is important.

We can never forget that this is our mission in this world; wherever we are, we are meant to be witnesses of Christ.

Then Christ gives them a message to be delivered, but not only is the message absolutely very important, but he also gives them other instructions on how they should do it. What is it that they should take with them? What are the instruments? What are, we can say, the tools that they should carry? They actually are very poor—no purse, no bag, no sandals. "Greet no one on the road." In a way, do not rely, Christ says, on your own securities. Do not rely on your own strength. Do not think that the proclaiming of the message will give you something, a purse or maybe something that you can hold on to. You are supposed just to go. The Lord will provide.

The Lord will provide. This "greeting no one on the road" means do not be held back by anyone, because it's easy sometimes. We do things, and then we start talking to this person, to that person, and we become distracted. Christ says, "Remember, remember what you are here for." This is a question that we need to always keep at the back of our mind: "What is the purpose of my being here on this Earth?"

No matter what state of life I am in, no matter if I am young or old, if I am single or maybe married today, it doesn't matter. I am to be the image of Christ. I am to be the one who opens the road so that Christ may arrive in whatever reality, whatever situation we are in.

So, he says, "I am sending you out like lambs into the midst of wolves." Yes, we need, first of all, to have this attitude—the attitude of this lamb. We know who made himself a lamb; even though, as one of the poets says, he was a lion to vanquish, he became lamb to suffer. Christ has become this lamb that allowed himself to be in the midst of wolves. We know what happened to him, but this is what we are celebrating.

We are celebrating not only this kenosis, this abasement of Christ—his humiliation—but we are celebrating in this mass, really, the Paschal mystery, which means the mystery of his passion, death, and resurrection. We know that the lamb is victorious. It is not the wolf who is victorious, but it is the lamb who, after all, rises from the dead and calls us to follow him wherever he goes.

There is a mission ahead of us every day. We can never forget that there is a mission. Of course, yes, Christ gives more instructions, and he himself confirms that he is there. The most important thing is this: we can bring other people into the kingdom of God, he waits for each one that he has created.