

SEPTEMBER 25 FATHER VIJAI AMIRTHARAJ

Dr. Tony Campolo is a well-known American inspirational speaker and author who has spent much of his time traveling around the world on speaking tours. While he traveled, his wife, Peggy, chose to stay home and raise their two children. On those rare occasions when Peggy did travel with Tony, she often found herself engaged in conversation with some of the most accomplished people in the world: doctors, lawyers, politicians, and so on.

After one such trip, Peggy told Tony that sometimes, as she met these powerful individuals, she felt intimidated and even questioned her own self-worth. Dr. Tony responded, “Well, honey, why don’t you come up with something you could say when you meet people that will let them know that you strongly value what you do and how crucial and important it is for society.”

Not long after that, Dr. Tony and Peggy Campolo were at a party when a woman asked Peggy in a rare, rather condescending tone, “Well, my dear, what do you do?” Tony Campolo heard his wife say, “I am nurturing two homo sapiens into the dominant values of the Judeo-Christian tradition, in order that they may become instruments for the transformation of the social order into the kind of eschatological utopia God envisioned from the beginning of time.” The other woman replied, “Oh my! I am just a lawyer.”

Sisters and brothers, our Gospel reading today speaks of how our Lord Jesus called and sent out his apostles to proclaim and heal, just as He called and sent forth Dr. Tony Campolo to be an author and speaker, and his wife to be a caretaker for their children. The Gospel tells us that Jesus called his apostles to be with Him and to learn from Him, which is

what they have been doing until this point in Luke's Gospel. They followed Jesus, witnessed Him preaching the Gospel, curing the sick, and performing miracles.

However, it is one thing to see, and another thing to actually do. It is sometimes like observing young altar servers who shadow their senior counterparts for many months. When the time comes for them to take on the role by themselves, they may feel at a loss. Happily, after a few attempts, they pick it up and gain confidence.

So, after a period of being with Jesus and learning from Him, they are sent out by Jesus to do the very things He was doing—namely, to care, to preach, to heal, and so on. What we notice here is that the sending out of the apostles has an interesting mixture of power and dependence. On one hand, Jesus lends His apostles His own power to preach, teach, heal, and cast out demons. On the other hand, He instructs them not to take anything with them.

I'm sure we all know how challenging that can be, as our tendency is to pack more than we actually need, just in case. When I travel, I always end up packing more than I truly require. Taking nothing or very little would make it easier for the apostles to move from one place to another. But more importantly, it invites them to trust God for their day-to-day needs.

It is as if Jesus is saying to His apostles, “You saw me multiply the loaves and fish; can you trust me to provide for your food and drink? You saw me cast out demons; can you trust me to provide for your shelter? You witnessed me calm the sea; can you trust me to calm your fears about your material security?”

Now, sisters and brothers, these questions about trust are not only directed to the apostles; they are also addressed to each of us. Today, we are the disciples of Jesus, called to be His apostles. Our Lord Jesus has called us, taught us, and sent us out into the world, like the apostles, to be His witnesses and instruments.

As we do that, He may not instruct us, as He did with His apostles, to take nothing with us for our journey. However, He asks us to trust in Him for our security. The phrase “Jesus, I trust in you” should not merely be a slogan we see on Divine Mercy portraits; it must become our way of life. This is the invitation that Jesus extends to us today through the calling and sending of His apostles.

As we continue with this Mass, let us pray for a deeper trust in the Lord, a trust that may become a way of life for us each and every day. Amen.