

JULY 6 2025 FATHER VIJAI AMIRTHARAJ

A preacher was speaking at an open-air crusade in Halifax, Nova Scotia of Canada. Billy Graham, the great evangelist, was to speak the following night, but he arrived a day early. And so, he came unnoticed and sat on the grass with the crowd.

In front of him sat an elderly gentleman, who seemed to be listening attentively to the preacher at the front. When the call came for people to come forward and make a commitment to the Lord, the gentleman did not move.

Dr. Graham tapped the man on his shoulder and asked, "Would you like to accept Christ? I'll be glad to walk down with you if you want to." The old man looked him up and down and shook his head and said, "No, I think I will just wait 'til the big gun shows up tomorrow night."

Sisters and brothers, the gospel for the 14th Sunday in Ordinary Time speaks of Jesus sending the 70 disciples to evangelize in His name, to bring His presence to the people. Now, in the thinking of the man in the above incident, and in the thinking of many people, evangelization, or the bringing of the love and peace of Christ, or bringing people to Christ, is something reserved for the big guns.

However, today's gospel story shows us that this mission and ministry belong to all of us in the Church. It is for everyone, big and small guns alike. It is for the clergy, as well as for the laity who are baptized and commissioned by Christ.

So, how are we to actively participate in the ministry of evangelization? I'm sure we know some of the ways, and there are many ways. However, in today's gospel, Jesus highlights for us two important ways, namely prayer and action.

First, Jesus says, "Ask the Lord of the harvest to send labourers into His harvest." Even if some of us are not very active out in the world, all of us can pray for the mission of the Church, for the people to open their hearts to receive God's peace and love, for God to open people's hearts to serve God, and to serve God's people.

And second, Jesus says, "Go on your way. See. I am sending you." This calls for our active involvement in the mission of the Church, in the mission of evangelization. We must try to make a positive difference in the lives of the people around us, in our families, in our churches, in our workplaces, in our residences, and so on.

Sisters and brothers, every Christian is called to be an evangelist. Every Christian is called to participate in the spreading of the gospel through our commitment to prayer and through our commitment to action.

We may have heard this saying: "Pray as if everything depends on God and work as if everything depends on you."

So, we pray today for all of us, and for all Christians, that as Saint Paul reminds us in our second reading, "We may carry the mark of Christ in us and proclaim Him through our lives."

Giving thanks and praise in our prayers. Amen.