

SEPTEMBER 24 2025 FATHER VIJAI AMIRTHARAJ

Some of you football fans will remember when Bo Schembechler was the coach of the Michigan Wolverines.

It is said Schembechler used to work his players especially hard during the spring practice, to see what kind of young men he had, winners or quitters.

And he made a sign with a slogan on it and hung it above the locker room door. The sign read like this: "Those who stay will be champions."

Of course, not everyone stayed. One morning, when Schembechler came to the office and looked at the sign, under the words, "Those who stay will be champions," someone had written, "And those who quit will be doctors, lawyers, and captains of industry."

Now, sisters and brothers, we are all called by God, but not all of us are called to one particular way of life. Our vocations vary. Some of us are called to serve as priests. Some of us are called to serve as teachers. Some others as homemakers. Or some, to help in healthcare or hospitality industry, and so on.

Not everyone was called to be the original 12 disciples of Jesus. There were many more in addition to the 12 who followed Jesus, who were interested with his mission, who, in their own way, proclaimed the good news about God's kingdom.

Now, no matter what our vocation is, we are all called through our vocations to bring the loving and healing presence of God.

Today's Gospel speaks of how Jesus sent out his 12 disciples on a mission. Jesus, of course, called his disciples to be with him and to learn from him, and then to continue his mission.

The Gospels indicate how, sometimes, the disciples were very successful in their ministry and in their mission, and how sometimes they were unsuccessful. For example, in Mark 6, we read how the disciples returned from their mission journey and told Jesus that they were able to heal and to bring restoration people-- to people's lives, and they said how even the demons and evil powers obeyed them.

But then, on the other hand, in Matthew 17, we read about a father who comes to Jesus seeking healing for his son who is epileptic. And he tells Jesus that he first brought his son to his disciples, and they were not able to do anything for him. And then, Jesus tells his disciples that they were not able to heal the boy because of their little faith.

Now, Jesus commissioned his disciples with their gifts and with their shortcomings, and sent them forth on a mission. And similarly, he has sent each of us today on a mission into our world, with our goodness and with our weaknesses.

Now, for some of us, this would mean going to distant lands. I can think of my own community of Holy Cross. Many years ago, the priests of Holy Cross from Canada came to India to begin to build and to carry on the mission of Holy Cross in India. And today, you know, Father Francis, Father Roshan, and some other Holy Cross priests, and of course, myself, from India, are here in Canada to continue the Holy Cross mission here.

That being said, for most of us, we have to take only few steps, so to say, to do our mission, to go towards our neighbours, to go towards our other family members, and to bring the compassion and kindness and healing of Christ and God.

Unfortunately, in our busy, technology-dominated world of today, in some families, though family members live under the same roof, they do not have time for each other. Parents have no time for their children, and children have no time for their parents.

Living in such a world, we are called to be intentional. Intentional in being a missionary. Intentional in bringing the loving, caring, and healing presence of God.

Today, when we see the faithlessness and insensitivity and the uncaring attitude of many people in our world among us, we can be disappointed or discouraged, like Ezra in our first reading. But we are called not to be discouraged, but rather to be those little rays of Christ, rays that bring hope and healing to the people of our time.

And so, today, we pray for such a life for each of us. Amen.