

15th Sunday (B)

12th July 2015

'Go out ... Proclaim the Good News'

Amos 7: the Lord took me from herding the flock. Ps 84: I will hear what the Lord God has to say ... Eph 1: *In Him we have redemption through His blood*
Mk 6: 7-13: *take nothing for the journey*

In Birmingham yester/to-day there was/is a big national Catholic conference, with participants from across the country, called '*Proclaim '15*' — it's a conference on evangelization. Pope Francis has repeatedly called for us to re-discover that mission as parishes to be evangelizing; parishes that are not static in their celebration of the faith, but going out to make new disciples; to explain the faith and bring ever more people into salvation in the Church. The Church is always missionary, even where, like here in England, the Church has been present for well over 1400yrs. Always, the Church has to be newly missionary, reaching out to those of our own day who are not baptized, not with us in the fold of the Church.

We heard there in the Gospel of the sending-out of the Twleve apostles by Jesus: they were sent to evangelize the people of Israel — to bring to them the Good News, encourage them to repentance, offer them the healing of

Christ, and first of all the simple welcome from Jesus their Lord and Master. Even Jesus did not choose to do His evangelizing all by Himself — He involved His disciples as collaborators; He entrusted them with the Gospel, and with His own authority over the Evil One.

The Church sees it as the task of every one of the baptized to be spreading the Gospel. It's not some task that we delegate to the Pope, bishops, priests. If we do not all play our part in explaining and promoting the faith, then it will not reach all those whom God would intend it to reach. The lay members of the Church reach into every part of society, every workplace, every community. In this way, the Gospel can be spread, by the word, example, invitation of each one of us, when we live the Gospel well.

One of the most important initiatives each year in the parish is the 'RCIA' programme. 'RCIA' stands for 'Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults', and is a course of meetings that runs from September to Easter each year, to instruct and accompany those adults who would wish to receive the Sacraments of Initiation — i.e. Baptism,

Confirmation, and the Holy Eucharist. It's run by me along with a small number of our parishioners who accompany the group through the course; and is open to at least three sets of participants: (i) those adults who are not baptized; (ii) those adults who are baptized Christians but now wish to enter full communion with us and be Catholic Christians; (iii) those adults who are already Catholics but have never received the Sacrament of Confirmation.

It's the time of year when I would like to hear from those who want to consider entering the RCIA programme in the autumn ... but to do that I need *you* all to be at your task of evangelizing. I need you to be having the conversations with those you know. Who is there, amongst your family members or amongst your friends whom the Lord may be calling to Baptism, Confirmation, Holy Communion? You may well know someone — there may be someone who comes immediately to mind — whom you know has been considering the move to becoming a Catholic. Now is the time to speak to them. Or maybe there are a number here at Mass already who for some

reason have missed out on the crucial Sacrament of Confirmation — it's best if you come forward to join us in the RCIA programme and prepare in that informal and welcoming atmosphere. If you've missed out on Confirmation, for some reason, don't be embarrassed about that; simply come and join RCIA! Alongside the Newsletters there are plenty of copies of *this* green leaflet. It explains RCIA in more detail — take one for yourself; take one for someone you want to speak to, and invite to think about the Sacraments, or becoming a Catholic. Don't be timid: this *is* your being sent out by Jesus to proclaim the Good News! Here's the prayer of 'Proclaim '15':

Loving Father, You so loved the world that you sent us your only Son, that we might believe in Him and have eternal life.
May we encounter Jesus Christ anew this day and live the Good News with joy.
Through the power of your Holy Spirit, help us to "go out to the whole world and proclaim" our faith with confidence.
Give us the courage to witness to the Joy of the Gospel by our words and actions.
Help our parish to become more welcoming and missionary, so that You may be known and loved by all people.
Through Christ Our Lord. Amen.

Our Lady, Star of the New Evangelization, **Pray for us.**
Blessed John Henry Newman, **Pray for us.**
St Thérèse of Lisieux, **Pray for us.**