



In today's Gospel, Jesus begins to share his mission with his twelve closest followers. Jesus has already chosen them to work with him.

Now he puts them to work, sending them out "two by two" armed with his authority to confront the power of evil. He instructs them to travel light. This means no bread, because food will be provided by others' hospitality. It means no (sleeping) bag, as lodging will be provided. It means no money, for they will be looked after. They can bring a staff, sandals and a single tunic because they will be continually on the move.

This text reminds us that the earliest Christian missionaries travelled light and set themselves apart from the wandering preachers of other religions, who brought lots of baggage with them. Mark is saying something important as he records these very specific instructions of Jesus. Jesus is on an urgent missionary journey. The staff and the sandals are the symbols of that journey and so these are appropriate for those who share in his mission. Any other baggage, especially that which might weigh them down and slow their progress, is not permitted.

Jesus also instructs them about where they are to stay. The issue here is the integrity of the Gospel. If they arrive in a place and then move from house to house seeking better lodging, nicer food or more friendly company, this would be a counter-witness to the Gospel. If they encounter lack of hospitality they are to move on from the village. This is exactly what Jesus did when he was rejected by the people of his own village of Nazareth. Jesus even tells them to shake the dust of such places from their feet. Jews returning to the Holy Land would perform this ritual as they left pagan territory so as not to import "uncleanness" with them. It symbolised the godlessness of the pagan land and the holiness of Israel. The Twelve, in performing the same gesture, relegate to the godless world those inhospitable places that have rejected the Gospel. In this way the Twelve proclaim the Gospel as Jesus does, with integrity of word and deed.

After receiving their instructions, they set out and their mission is successful. Mark adds some important details. The preaching of the Twelve is so that all should repent, which is the key missionary goal of Jesus. The Twelve also heal sick people, something Jesus has done many times before. Mark adds that they anoint sick people with oil. This was a widespread practice in the Greek world by the time Mark's Gospel was written and now becomes part of the practice of the Christian Church.

Ironically, the mission of the Twelve is more successful than Jesus' own mission in Nazareth. Yet the Twelve are missionary only to the extent that they are with Jesus, recognise that his authority has been given to them, and travel light. At all times they remain his followers. ■

SAY

"Lord, help me to be an effective witness to you today and always. Amen."

PRAY

Thank God for missionaries, those who have left home and travelled light, in order to preach the Good News. Pray for those who give of themselves generously for the sake of the Gospel.

REFLECT

We know the value of travelling light. Budget-cost airlines like Ryanair encourage passengers to travel light. There is a penalty for excess luggage. Having one carry-on bag is not only less expensive, it also speeds up your journey. You don't have to wait at a slow-moving conveyor belt to claim your baggage. Airport security is easier to deal with. Travelling light, if we can, is the wise thing to do.

Today's Gospel points to something fundamental about the Church: it is most successful when it travels light and discards any baggage which gets in the way of its mission.

Since the time of Jesus there have been periods when the Church has travelled light and has been truly prophetic in proclaiming the Gospel. Think of missionaries who brought the bare necessities with them when going on long journeys to remote places. Think of all those Christians, lay and religious, who have chosen to live simple, frugal lives in order to witness to the Gospel.

There have been other times when, weighed down with wealth, power and a preoccupation with status, the Church has not travelled light and has failed the Gospel. Pope Francis has constantly called on Catholics to live simple lives in order to be a poor Church for those who are poor.

We can only hope that the crisis our Church has been going through in recent years will lead it to discard anything that gets in the way of Jesus' mission, so that the Gospel may be proclaimed anew with prophetic courage and integrity. ■

LEARN

As followers of Jesus, we all have a mission to preach the Gospel.

We can preach the Gospel wherever we live and work.

A preoccupation with wealth, status or power gets in the way of the Gospel.

DO

Think about your attitude to material things. How light do you travel?

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

As for me, in justice I shall behold your face;
I shall be filled with the vision of your glory.

GLORIA

Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace to people of good will.

We praise you,
we bless you,
we adore you,
we glorify you,
we give you thanks for your great glory,
Lord God, heavenly King,
O God, almighty Father.

Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,
you take away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us;
you take away the sins of the world,
receive our prayer;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father,
have mercy on us.

For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father.
Amen.

COLLECT

O God, who show the light of your truth
to those who go astray,
so that they may return to the right path,
give all who for the faith they profess
are accounted Christians
the grace to reject whatever is contrary to the
name of Christ
and to strive after all that does it honour.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of
the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

FIRST READING

Amos 7:12-15

A reading from the prophet Amos.

Amaziah, the priest of Bethel, said to Amos, "Go away, seer; get back to the land of Judah; earn your bread there, do your prophesying there. We want no more prophesying in Bethel; this is the royal sanctuary, the national temple." "I was no prophet, neither did I belong to any of the brotherhoods of prophets," Amos replied to Amaziah. "I was a shepherd, and looked after sycamores: but it was the Lord who took me from herding the flock, and the Lord who said, 'Go, prophesy to my people Israel.'"

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

PSALM

Psalm 84

Response:

Let us see, O Lord, your mercy
and give us your saving help.

- I will hear what the Lord God has to say,
a voice that speaks of peace,
peace for his people.
His help is near for those who fear him
and his glory will dwell in our land. (R.)
- Mercy and faithfulness have met;
justice and peace have embraced.
Faithfulness shall spring from the earth
and justice look down from heaven. (R.)

- The Lord will make us prosper
and our earth shall yield its fruit.
Justice shall march before him
and peace shall follow his steps. (R.)

SECOND READING Ephesians 1:3-14

(For shorter form read between > <)

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Ephesians.

>Blessed be God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
who has blessed us with all the spiritual blessings of heaven in Christ.
Before the world was made, he chose us,
chose us in Christ,
to be holy and spotless, and to live through love in his presence,
determining that we should become his adopted sons, through Jesus Christ,
for his own kind purposes,
to make us praise the glory of his grace,
his free gift to us in the Beloved in whom, through his blood, we gain our freedom, the forgiveness of our sins.
Such is the richness of the grace which he has showered on us in all wisdom and insight.

He has let us know the mystery of his purpose,
the hidden plan he so kindly made in Christ to act upon when the times had run their course to the end:
that he would bring everything together under Christ, as head,
everything in the heavens and everything on earth.<
And it is in him that we were claimed as God's own,
chosen from the beginning,
under the predetermined plan of the one who guides all things
as he decides by his own will;
chosen to be,
for his greater glory,
the people who would put their hopes in Christ before he came.
Now you too, in him,
have heard the message of the truth and the good news of your salvation,
and have believed it:
and you too have been stamped with the seal of the Holy Spirit of the Promise,
the pledge of our inheritance which brings freedom for those whom God has taken for his own,
to make his glory praised.

>The word of the Lord.<
Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia!

Your words are spirit, Lord,
and they are life:
you have the message of eternal life.
Alleluia!

GOSPEL

Mark 6:1-13

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark.

Jesus summoned the Twelve and began to send them out in pairs giving them authority over the unclean spirits. And he instructed them to take nothing for the journey except a staff – no bread, no haversack, no coppers for their purses. They were to wear sandals but, he added, "Do not take a spare tunic."

And he said to them, "If you enter a house anywhere, stay there until you leave the district. And if any place does not welcome you and people refuse to listen to you, as you walk away shake off the dust from under your feet as a sign to them." So they set off to preach repentance; and they cast out many devils, and anointed many sick people with oil and cured them.

The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

PROFESSION OF FAITH

I believe in one God,
the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the Only Begotten Son of God,
born of the Father before all ages.
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father;

through him all things were made.
For us men and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,

(all bow during the next three lines)

and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary,
and became man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate,
he suffered death and was buried,
and rose again on the third day
in accordance with the Scriptures.
He ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory
to judge the living and the dead
and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord,
the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is adored
and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church.
I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins
and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Look upon the offerings of the Church, O Lord,
as she makes her prayer to you,
and grant that, when consumed by those who believe,
they may bring ever greater holiness.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

The sparrow finds a home,
and the swallow a nest for her young:
by your altars, O Lord of hosts, my King and my God.

Blessed are they who dwell in your house,
for ever singing your praise.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Having consumed these gifts, we pray,
O Lord,
that, by our participation in this mystery,
its saving effects upon us may grow.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.