

Fourteenth Sunday of Ordinary Time-C

Lk: 10:1-11

Dear Friends,

Jesus was very clear. The selected seventy-two were to proclaim the arrival of the kingdom of God. This message was forthright and simple. God is acting. God is responding to the evil in all its expression's in human life. The healing that Jesus tasked the disciples with is the beginning of the final transformation of reality in peace, wholeness and integrity. Justice will prevail over a sinful and broken world, over each and every person.

The disciples' task was what we call today evangelization. Their first and foremost responsibility was to let the message of Jesus flow from a heart of deep personal conviction. To do this they must travel lightly and strip themselves of the false values and deceptions of the world. Our world today, like the world in Jesus' time, has no acceptance for God who acts against the sinfulness of the day. The integrity of the disciples' presence and commitment was the most important part of the proclamation of the kingdom. It had to consume their whole being first of all.

Centuries later, Francis of Assisi captured the depth of this mystery. He said we must preach the gospel at all times and use words only when necessary. Such a person has been described as a witness whose life speaks so profoundly that one cannot hear what they say.

For over forty years, the Popes, from Paul VI to Francis, have been insistent on the utter importance of the mission of evangelization, the proclamation the Good News.

Pope Francis' *The Joy of the Gospel* is a canticle of wonder on the topic of evangelization as the self-defining task of the People of God. In *the Joy of the Gospel*, Francis brings a brilliance and power to the fundamental task of the People of God, to proclaim the Gospel. By baptism, all are called to holiness. All are called to be missionary disciples.

Francis envisions a new day for the Church. All this renewal will flow from a refocusing on the mission of evangelization. The Pontiff says, **"I dream of a 'missionary option,' that is, a missionary impulse capable of transforming everything, so that the Church's customs, ways of doing things, times and schedules, language and structures can be suitably channeled for the evangelization of today's world rather than for her self-preservation"** (#27).

The main characteristics of the evangelizing mission Francis calls us to are:

1. It is the fundamental task of the Church. It is also the essential ministry of the parish and the individual disciple of Christ.
2. The evangelization involves not just the personal transformation but of all reality in its social, economic, political and cultural expressions.

3. The proclamation must always center on the saving love and mercy revealed in Christ crucified and Christ risen.