

Meditation 7

Luke 10:1-12,16-20

The Mission of the Seventy-two

After this the Lord appointed seventy[-two] others whom he sent ahead of him in pairs to every town and place he intended to visit. He said to them, "The harvest is abundant but the laborers are few; so ask the master of the harvest to send out laborers for his harvest. Go on your way; behold, I am sending you like lambs among wolves. Carry no money bag, no sack, no sandals; and greet no one along the way. Into whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace to this household.' If a peaceful person lives there, your peace will rest on him; but if not, it will return to you. Stay in the same house and eat and drink what is offered to you, for the laborer deserves his payment. Do not move about from one house to another. Whatever town you enter and they welcome you, eat what is set before you, cure the sick in it and say to them, 'The kingdom of God is at hand for you.' Whatever town you enter and they do not receive you, go out into the streets and say, 'The dust of your town that clings to our feet, even that we shake off against you.' Yet know this: the kingdom of God is at hand. I tell you, it will be more tolerable for Sodom on that day than for that town. . . . Whoever listens to you listens to me. Whoever rejects you rejects me. And whoever rejects me rejects the one who sent me." The seventy[-two] returned rejoicing, and said, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us because of your name." Jesus said, "I have observed Satan fall like lightning from the sky. Behold, I have given you the power 'to tread upon serpents' and scorpions and upon the full force of the enemy and nothing will harm you. Nevertheless, do not rejoice because the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice because your names are written in heaven."

Points for Meditation

- 1) After this. . . "The Wanna-be followers of Jesus".

"As they were proceeding on their journey someone said to him, "I will follow you wherever you go." Jesus answered him, "Foxes have dens and birds of the sky have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to rest his head." And to another he said, "Follow me." But he replied, "[Lord,] let me go first and bury my father." But he answered him, "Let the dead bury their dead. But you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God." And another said, "I will follow you, Lord, but first let me say farewell to my family at home." [To him] Jesus said, "No one who sets a hand to the plow and looks to what was left behind is fit for the kingdom of God."

2) “. . . so ask the master of the harvest to send out laborers for his harvest.”

(For a good meditation on our topic, we would highly recommend a classic spirituality book, *The Soul of the Apostolate* by Jean Baptiste Chautard).

Pope Francis has a beautiful way of describing/defining the virtue of piety when he says: “. . . Piety, therefore, is synonymous of authentic religious spirit, filial confidence in God, of the capacity to pray to Him with love and simplicity which is proper of persons who are humble of heart. The gift of piety makes us grow in our relation and communion with God and leads us to live as His children; at the same time, it helps us to pour this love also on others and to recognize them as brothers.”

I would like to go even further. Not only should we practice the habit of piety/prayer, we ourselves should become prayer! It was said of St. Francis of Assisi, that he was “una preghiera vivente”! He was a living prayer. Through your perseverance, dedication, your good habit of daily encountering Jesus, you too will become “una preghiera vivente”, a living pray-ER! “. . . So ASK the master.”

3) **“Nevertheless, do not rejoice because the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice because your names are written in heaven.”**

Listen to what Pope Francis said at the beginning of his pontificate: “. . . What we need especially in these times are credible witnesses who with their life and also with their word **render the Gospel visible, reawaken attraction for Jesus Christ, for God’s beauty.**” (The Holy Father’s address to the participants in the Plenary Assembly of the Pontifical Council for Promoting the New Evangelization, October 14, 2013.)

And the Pope elsewhere, quoting the book of Nehemiah said, “In Nehemiah Chapter 8, the people returned to Jerusalem and rediscovered the book of the law. There was a ‘great celebration and all the people gathered to listen to the priest Ezra, who read the book of the law,’ the Pope described. The people were moved and wept tears of joy, he said. ‘When the priest Ezra finished, Nehemiah said to the people: “Rest assured, now do not cry anymore, **keep the joy**, because joy in the Lord is your strength.”’ Pope Francis said, “this word from the book of Nehemiah will help us today.”

"The great strength that we have to transform, to preach the Gospel, to go forward as witnesses of life is the joy of the Lord, which is a fruit of the Holy Spirit, **and today we ask him to grant us this fruit.**" (From the homily of Pope Francis in Santa Marta, Vatican City, Apr 16, 2020.)

Quotes on the virtues of a disciple/mentor/evangelizer:

Joy is not necessarily the absence of suffering. It is the presence of God.

“Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness.” James 1:2

“The true way to advance in holy virtues, is to persevere in a holy cheerfulness.”
~St. Philip Neri

Possible Resolutions

- 1) Practice the virtue of cheerfulness today in all circumstances, as a means of evangelization.
- 2) Sometime today read a part of Pope Francis', “The Joy of the Gospel”.
- 3) Reread and reflect on one of the theories of this week on the virtues, that particularly grabbed your attention.

Notes
