

THE 11TH SUNDAY OF THE YEAR 'A'.

June 15, 2008

(Exodus 19: 2-6; Romans 5: 6-11; Matthew 9:36 – 10:8)

“The harvest is great but the laborers are few”.

Jesus commissioned his disciples to carry on the works which he did – to speak God's word and to bring his healing power to the weary and oppressed. It is important that we recognize that this commission involved not only the Apostles and their '**successors**', the bishops of the Church, but also by every baptized member of the Church. So the Gospel challenges us to consider the mission of the church and our role in carrying it out.

In the choice of the twelve Apostles, Jesus chose very ordinary people who could take up his assignment and do it extraordinarily well. He chose these men, not for what they were, but for what they would be capable of becoming under his direction and power. When the Lord calls us to serve, we must not think we have little or nothing to offer. That is not true. We have a lot to offer - our time, talents and treasures. All these are free gifts from God. Let us give God chance to work through and in us for his glory.

My dear people of God, one may ask: where do we begin? Jesus instructed the Apostles on where to start their mission: ***“Go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel” (Matthew 10:6)***, that is, to start from familiar territory - the Jews, avoiding the evangelization of the Gentiles and the Samaritans. Later on he would commission them to ***“go and make disciples of all nations” (Matthew 28:19)***, but for now they must limit their outreach to within their own people. Mission, like charity, begins at home. The place for us to begin, therefore, would be with the lapsed and lukewarm members of our own families and our own parishes.

In today's Gospel, Jesus teaches the apostles that he was sending out on mission that they must be willing to give back some of what they have received. His words to them: are ***“You received without payment; give without payment” (Matthew 10:8)***. Missionary generosity, the giving of oneself, one's time, services and resources in the service of God's kingdom becomes possible only when we realize that all we are and all we have, including life itself, is a gift from God. As the Apostle Paul says, ***“What do you have that you did not receive?” (1 Corinthians 4:7)***.

Being a Christian is, in fact, a life of conscious receiving and giving back to God. As children of God we receive the grace of faith, we receive the word of

God, we receive forgiveness, we receive the sacraments, and we receive new life in the Spirit. But we only complete the circuit of God's grace when we go out and share these same blessings with those who do not as yet have them.

So my brothers and sisters, at the end of each Mass, when the Priest or Deacon says: ***“Let us go in peace to love and serve the Lord”***, and we respond, ***“Thanks be to God”***, let this word sound deeper in our hearts that we may put it into action throughout the week.

GOD IS GOOD! ALL THE TIME!