



1) Opening prayer

Lord,
our help and guide,
make your love the foundation of our lives.
May our love for you express itself
in our eagerness to do good for others.
You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

2) Gospel Reading - Luke 10,1-9

The Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them out ahead of him in pairs, to all the towns and places he himself would be visiting. And he said to them, 'The harvest is rich but the labourers are few, so ask the Lord of the harvest to send labourers to do his harvesting. Start off now, but look, I am sending you out like lambs among wolves. Take no purse with you, no haversack, no sandals. Salute no one on the road.

Whatever house you enter, let your first words be, "Peace to this house!" And if a man of peace lives there, your peace will go and rest on him; if not, it will come back to you. Stay in the same house, taking what food and drink they have to offer, for the labourer deserves his wages; do not move from house to house.

Whenever you go into a town where they make you welcome, eat what is put before you. Cure those in it who are sick, and say, "The kingdom of God is very near to you."

3) Reflection

? Today, the feast of the Evangelist Saint Luke, the Gospel presents to us the sending out of the seventy-two disciples who have to announce the Good News of God in the villages and in the cities of Galilee. We are the seventy-two who come after the Twelve. Through the mission of the disciples Jesus seeks to recover the community values of the tradition of the people who felt crushed by the twofold slavery of the Roman domination

and by the official Religion. Jesus tries to renew and organize the communities in such a way that again they are an expression of the Covenant, an example of the Kingdom of God. This is why he insists in hospitality, sharing, communion, acceptance of the excluded. This insistence of Jesus is found in the advice that he gave to his disciples when he sent them out on mission. At the time of Jesus there were other movements which, like Jesus, were looking for a new way to live and to live together, for example John the Baptist, the Pharisees and others. They also formed communities of disciples (Jn 1, 35; Lk 11, 1; Ac 19, 3) and they had their missionaries (Mt 23, 15). But as we will see there was a great difference.

? Luke 10, 1-3: The Mission. Jesus sends out the disciples to the places where he wanted to go. The disciple is the spokesperson of Jesus. He is not the owner of the Good News. He sends them out two by two. That favours reciprocal help, because the mission is not individual, but rather it is a community mission.

? Luke 10, 2-3: Co-responsibility. The first task is to pray in order that God sends labourers. All the disciples have to feel that they are responsible for the mission. This is why I should pray to the Father for the continuity of the mission. Jesus sends out his disciples as lambs in the middle of wolves. The mission is a difficult and dangerous task; because the system in which the disciples lived and in which we live was and continues to be contrary to the reorganization of living communities.

? Luke 10, 4-6: Hospitality. Contrary to the other missionaries, the disciples of Jesus should not take anything with them, no haversack, no sandals; but they should take peace. This means that they have to trust in the hospitality of the people; because the disciple who goes without anything, taking only peace, indicates that he trusts in people. He thinks that he will be welcomed, and people will feel respected and confirmed. By means of this practice the disciple criticizes the laws of exclusion and recovers the ancient values of life in a community. Do not greet anybody on the way means that no time should be lost with things which do not belong to the mission.

? Luke 10, 7: Sharing. The disciples should not go from house to house, but they should remain in the same house. That is that they should live together with others in a stable way, participate in the life and work of the people and live and live from what they receive in exchange, because the labourer deserves his wages. This means that they should trust the sharing. Thus, by means of this new practice, they recover an ancient tradition of the people, criticizing a culture of accumulation which characterized the politics of the Roman Empire and they announced a new model of living together.

? Luke 10, 8: Communion around the table. When the Pharisees went on mission, they got ready. They thought that they could not trust the food the people would give them that it was not always ritually "pure". For this reason they took with them a haversack, a purse and money to be able to get their own food. Thus, instead of helping to overcome divisions, the observance of the Laws of purity weakened even more the living out of the community values. The disciples of Jesus should eat whatever the people offered them. They could not live separated, eating their own food. This means that they should accept sharing around the table. In contact with the people they should not be afraid to lose legal purity. Acting in that way, they criticize the laws which are in force, and they

announce a new access to purity, that it intimacy with God.

? Luke 10, 9a: The acceptance of the excluded. The disciples have to take care of the sick, cure the lepers and cast out devils (Mt 10, 8). That means that they should accept within the community those who were excluded. This practice of solidarity criticizes the society that excluded and indicates concrete ways for this. This is what the pastoral ministry with the excluded, migrants and marginalized does today.

? Luke 10, 9b: The coming of the Kingdom. If these requests are respected, then the disciples can and should shout out to all parts of the world: The Kingdom of God has arrived! To proclaim the Kingdom is not in the first place to teach truth and doctrine, but to lead toward a new way of living and living together as brothers and sisters starting from the Good News which Jesus has proclaimed to us: God is Father and Mother of all of us.

4) Personal questions

? Hospitality, sharing, communion, welcoming and acceptance of the excluded: are pillars which support community life. How does this take place in my community?

? What does it mean for me to be Christian? In an interview on T.V. a person answered as follows to the journalist: "I am a Christian, I try to live the Gospel, but I do not participate in the community of the Church". And the journalist commented: "Then do you consider yourself a football player without a team!" Is this my case?

5) Concluding prayer

All your creatures shall thank you, Yahweh,
and your faithful shall bless you.

They shall speak of the glory of your kingship
and tell of your might. (Ps 145,10-11)