



### 1) Opening prayer

Almighty and ever-living God,  
strengthen our faith, hope and love.  
May we do with loving hearts  
what you ask of us  
and come to share the life you promise.  
We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,  
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,  
one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

### 2) Gospel Reading - Luke 6,12-19

*Now it happened in those days that Jesus went onto the mountain to pray; and he spent the whole night in prayer to God.*

*When day came he summoned his disciples and picked out twelve of them; he called them 'apostles': Simon whom he called Peter, and his brother Andrew, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James son of Alphaeus, Simon called the Zealot, Judas son of James, and Judas Iscariot who became a traitor.*

*He then came down with them and stopped at a piece of level ground where there was a large gathering of his disciples, with a great crowd of people from all parts of Judaea and Jerusalem and the coastal region of Tyre and Sidon who had come to hear him and to be cured of their diseases. People tormented by unclean spirits were also cured, and everyone in the crowd was trying to touch him because power came out of him that cured them all.*

### 3) Reflection

- Today the Gospel speaks about two facts: (a) to describe the choice of the twelve Apostles (Lk 6, 12-16) and (b) it informs that an immense crowd wanted to meet Jesus to listen to him, to touch him and to be cured (Lk 6, 17-19).
- Luke 6, 12-13: Jesus spends the night in prayer and chooses the twelve apostles. Before the definitive choice of the twelve Apostles, Jesus goes up to the mountain and there spends the whole night in prayer. He prays in order to know whom to choose and he chooses the Twelve, whose names are given in the Gospels. And then they received the title of Apostles. Apostle means one sent, missionary. They were called to carry out a mission, the same mission that Jesus received from the Father (Jn 20, 21). Mark concretizes the mission and says that Jesus called them to be with him and to send them out on mission (Mk 3, 14).

- Luke 6, 14-16: The names of the twelve Apostles. With little differences the names of the Twelve are the same in the Gospels of Matthew (Mt 10, 2-4), Mark (Mk 3, 16-19) and Luke (Lk 6, 14-16). Many of these names come from the Old Testament: Simon is the name of one of the sons of the Patriarch Jacob (Gn 29, 33). James (Giacomo) is the same name as Jacob (Gn 25, 26). Judas is the name of the other son of Jacob (Gn 35, 23). Matthew even if he had the name of Levi (Mk 2, 14), the other son of Jacob (Gn 35, 23). Of the twelve Apostles, seven have the name which comes from the time of the Patriarchs: two times Simon, two times James, two times Judas, and one time Levi! That reveals the wisdom of the pedagogy of the people. By the names of the Patriarchs and the 'Matriarchs', given to the sons and daughters, people maintained alive the tradition of the ancients and helped their own children not to lose their identity. Which are the names that we give today to our sons and daughters?
- Luke 6,17-19: Jesus comes down from the mountain and people look for him. Coming down from the mountain with the twelve, Jesus encounters an immense crowd of people who was seeking to listen to his word and to touch him because they knew that from him came out a force of life. In this great crowd there were Jews and foreigners, people from Judaea and also from Tyre and Sidon. They were people who were abandoned, disoriented. Jesus accepts all those who seek him, Jews and Pagans! This is one of the themes preferred by Luke who writes for the converted Pagans.
- The persons called by Jesus are a consolation for us. The first Christians remembered and recorded the names of the Twelve Apostles and of the other men and women who followed Jesus closely. The Twelve, called by Jesus to form the first community with him, were not saints. They were common persons, like all of us. They had their virtues and their defects. The Gospels tell us very little about the temperament and the character of each one of them. But what they say, even if it is not much is a reason of consolation for us.
  - Peter was a generous person and full of enthusiasm (Mk 14, 29.31; Mt 14, 28-29), but in the moment of danger and of taking a decision, his heart becomes small and he turns back (Mt 14, 30; Mk 14, 66-72). He even got to be Satan for Jesus (Mk 8, 33). Jesus calls him Pietra- Rock (Pietro). Peter of himself was not Rock, he becomes Rock (roccia), because Jesus prays for him (Lk 22, 31-32).
  - James and John are ready to suffer with and for Jesus (Mk 10, 39), but they were very violent (Lk 9, 54). Jesus calls them "sons of thunder" (Mc 3, 17). John seemed to have a certain jealousy. He wanted Jesus only for his group (Mk 9, 38).
  - Philip had a certain welcoming way. He knew how to get others in contact with Jesus (Jn 1, 45-46), But he was not too practical in solving problems (Jn 12, 20-22; 6, 7). Sometimes he was very naïve. There was a moment when Jesus lost patience with him: Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and you still do not know me? (Jn 14, 8-9)
  - Andrew, the brother of Peter and friend of Philip, was more practical. Philip goes to him to solve the problems (Jn 12, 21-22). Andrew calls Peter (Jn 1, 40-41), and Andrew found the boy who had five loaves and two fish (Jn 6, 8-9).
  - Bartholomew seems to be the same as Nathanael. He was from that place and could not admit that something good could come from Nazareth (Jn 1, 46).

- Thomas was capable to maintain his opinion for a whole week, against the witness of all the others (Jn 20, 24-25). But when he saw that he was mistaken he was not afraid to recognize his error (Jn 20, 26-28). He was generous, ready to die with Jesus (Jn 11, 16).
- Mathew or Levi he was the Publican, the tax collector, like Zacchaeus (Mt 9, 9; Lk 19, 2). They were persons committed in the oppressing system of the time.
- Simon, instead seems belonged to the movement which was radically opposed to the system that the Roman Empire imposed on the Jewish people. This is why they also called it Zelots (Lk 6, 15). The group of the Zelots succeeded in provoking a armed revolt against the Romans.
- Judas was the one who was in charge of the money of the group (Jn 13, 29). He betrayed Jesus.
- James of Alphaeus and Judas Thadeus, of these two the Gospels say nothing except the name.

#### **4) Personal questions**

- Jesus spends the whole night in prayer to know whom to choose, and he chooses these twelve. What conclusions do you draw from this gesture of Jesus?
- The first Christians remembered the names of the twelve Apostles who were at the origin of their community. Do you remember the names of the persons who are at the origin of the community to which you belong? Do you remember the name of some catechist or professor who was significant for your Christian formation? What do you especially remember about them: the content of what they taught you or the witness that they gave you?

#### **5) Concluding prayer**

The Lord is good,  
his faithful love is everlasting,  
his constancy from age to age. (Ps 100,5)