



Jesus said to his disciples: "Go into the whole world and proclaim the Gospel to every creature. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved; whoever does not believe will be condemned. These signs will accompany those who believe: in my name they will drive out demons, they will speak new languages. They will pick up serpents with their hands, and if they drink any deadly thing, it will not harm them. They will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover." So then the Lord Jesus, after he spoke to them, was taken up into heaven and took his seat at the right hand of God. But they went forth and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the word through accompanying signs.

Introductory Prayer: Lord, as I begin this prayer I offer you my whole self: my thoughts, desires, decisions, actions, hopes, fears, weaknesses, failures and petty successes. I open my entire being to you, aware that you know everything already. I'm certain of your mercy and of the purifying power of your penetrating, loving gaze.

Petition: Lord help me to be an apostle of your kingdom.

1. God's Paradoxical Plan of Salvation: Jesus ascends into heaven, but before he does, he leaves his disciples a mission. He assigns them the task of building up his Church. Maybe we are so accustomed to the story that it no longer astonishes us — but it is truly incredible. These were the same men who just a few weeks earlier had abandoned Christ and locked themselves up in a room out of fear. Humanly speaking anyone would have bet a good deal that their mission was doomed to prompt and certain failure — yet here we are two thousand years later! I too, am called by Christ to spread my faith, and if I ever feel that I am not the best qualified for this mission, well... I just have to remember that my Captain is sitting at the right hand of the Father, directing the

whole operation.

2. Signs of God's Providence: Time and time again throughout history, Our Lord has shown signs of his power at work in his Church to strengthen our faith. Extraordinary miracles have always accompanied the preaching of the Gospel right to our own day. Devils are still driven out, and many sick are still being cured in the most extraordinarily unexplainable ways. The greatest miracle of all however is the miracle of Christ's continued presence with us in the Eucharist and the conversion of heart that takes place in the sacrament of reconciliation. God is constantly at work for his people. Even when he doesn't grant us astonishing signs, he does shower countless signs of his providence upon us every day. Am I able to recognize them?

3. The Lord at Work: The key to success in the mission of being a witness to Christ and his Gospel is found in letting God work. Like the first apostles, we have to cast our nets where the Lord directs us. So many times pride and human ambition have stood in the way of God's plan. We don't have to be anything special to work for the Lord; all we need to do is to follow his direction. What great quality do we really possess anyway that is not a gift from God and his already? Am I confident that the Lord is already at work in me? Do I recognize the signs of his provident love in my life, and do I thank him for them?

Conversation with Christ: Lord Jesus, help me to understand that being an apostle is not an option, but a demand of my baptism. It is the way I can respond to the immense love you have shown to me. Please continue to work in my life.

Resolution: I will pause before I go to bed and reflect on the signs of God's providence in my life, thanking him for them.