

Homily For Tuesday of the 10th Week of Ordinary Time- Year 1

St Peter's 8:30 AM/7:00 PM Masses - June 11, 2019

Acts 11: 21-26, 13: 1-3 "After fasting and praying they laid hands on Barnabas and Saul and sent them."

Psalm 98 "All the ends of the earth have seen the victory of our God."

Matthew 5: 13-16 "As you go, proclaim the good news: The kingdom of heaven has come near."

Called and Sent

Introduction

It was a good ride while it lasted. All that Lent and Easter stuff. I really felt the spirit of those high liturgical seasons here at St. Peter's. I hope you did too wherever you worship with your communities on Sundays. There will be Trinity Sunday, Corpus Christi and the Sacred Heart, so in that way the hits keep coming for awhile. But here we are plunked back into Ordinary Time, starting yesterday, in the liturgical year. Just Ordinary Time. We were praying, fasting and almsgiving for 40 days, then rejoicing for 50 days. What now? Before the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, the Apostles were asking each other that question: What should we do now? I don't know, what do you think? Well, we know how to fish. We could go back to that? Ok, let's do that.

Matthew

Before the coming of the Holy Spirit, it may have seemed like a dream that Jesus sent them out with very specific instructions to bring the message to the towns that the kingdom of heaven is near. They were to totally trust God. Go without anything except the Gospel. He had given them his own power over sickness, death and the demons. These would be the signs that the kingdom of heaven is near. But that was in the past for them.

Barnabas

What a transformation took place, though, with the fulfilment of Jesus' promise to send the Holy Spirit. In the Collect, the opening prayer of today's liturgy, we hear that God decreed that Barnabas, a man filled with faith and the Holy Spirit,

should be set apart to convert the nations. He is a key figure for us today. While the Apostles link us up between the two readings, Barnabas does so in a particular way. He was not an original Apostle, although it would be reasonable to say that his leadership is very much like a Bishop, one of those appointed to carry out the work of the first Bishops, the Apostles.

He was the one assigned to mentor Saul in the Christian faith after his dramatic conversion on the road. He was Saul's RCIA sponsor while he was getting his feet wet about Jesus Christ. He was also the one that the Apostles sent from Jerusalem to make sure that what they had heard about the Church at Antioch was the real thing and not something faith.

And after being inspired by the conversions to Christ that were going on there, and the authentic Gospel being preached, what was he thinking? I know, I'll go get Saul (later Paul) and bring him here. Saul had death threats in Jerusalem and was hiding out in his home town of Tarsus, but Barnabas thought he might be welcome in Antioch. So Barnabas was always thinking about how *he* could help the Church, but also how the gifts of others could bring the Good News to the world.

Called and Sent

Now we come to one of the keys of these readings. Jesus had called the Apostles. He mentored them in the life of grace, then he sent them to preach the kingdom to local Jewish communities. Called, mentored, sent. Jesus also called Saul. The Holy Spirit called Barnabas to mentor him. Then the Church, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, sent Saul and Barnabas to preach the Good News of the Kingdom of God to the entire world.

Call To Action

In all this very exciting story, we might almost miss something that will help us connect what we did way back in Lent with what we are called to do in ordinary time. It was when they were worshipping the Lord and fasting that they heard the Holy Spirit speak. And before they sent out Barnabas and Saul, they fasted and prayed.

Why did we pray and fast during Lent? Ultimately, we see that it is so we can hear the Holy Spirit call us, so we can see around us where the Gospel can be nurtured, and so we can be sent to proclaim that the kingdom is near.

Are we ready to walk with Jesus into the ordinary places of our lives, some good, some distressing? Are we prayerfully ready to walk into a pagan world that is doing everything it can to suck the life back out of the Good News, to push away the kingdom of heaven.

What are our instructions two thousand years after the first Pentecost? Fast --- pray --- listen to the Holy Spirit call us --- let the Church mentor us and send us. Vatican II proclaimed that it is the role of the laity to bring the kingdom of heaven into the ordinary places of the world, into every nook and cranny.

Pray with the psalmist: All the ends of the earth have seen the victory of God. Stay close to the Church. Listen to the Holy Spirit. Even today's Gospel Acclamation will remind us: Go and teach all people my gospel; I am with you always, until the end of the world.

The news is good indeed, even in ordinary time we proclaim: O death, where is your sting. O hell, where is your victory. Come stand in the light of Christ risen from the dead. The kingdom of heaven has come near to you. This is the new ordinary reality. Now go tell the world in the ordinary places of your lives.