

## Ordinary Time 15

Today's Gospel reading is an account of Jesus sending out the Twelve two-by-two, their mission to drive out ailments both spiritual and physical. They do not travel alone. They don't carry more than they need for one day, trusting in the Lord's provision for the rest. They go out under His authority, not their own. Their goal was not so much "success", because they never knew who might be ready to respond. Perhaps most won't be ready. The measure is their obedience to the One who sends them - not the numbers who respond to their witness. These followers of Jesus were given of His authority over the spirit of evil. In some ways we can see this as the model for our ministries: whether ordained, serving in religious life, or laymen and women. Do you see yourself as being sent out to help others find their way through the murkiness and temptations of everyday life?

In today's second reading we hear that each sincere follower of Jesus Christ has been chosen. Jesus Himself said to His followers, His disciples, that "It was not you who chose me; it was I who chose you-and appointed you to go and bear fruit – fruit that will last" A spiritual legacy that will outlive you, and in fact, is eternal.

If you are a disciple of Jesus seeking to accomplish His will in your life, then whether you know it or not you were chosen – as Paul says "destined". That doesn't mean you didn't have to say "yes" or don't have to keep saying yes. But there were countless circumstances beyond your own control, people, circumstances both good and bad that shaped you to be the person who, at some point, said "yes" or is saying "yes" to Him. We are not some random group of people here - purely from our own decisions. No, God chose you for adoption as a child of God, through Jesus Christ, through His blood, his death on the Cross, to receive forgiveness, freedom, and an eternal identity. We are all sinners, and God uses us anyway. And we can become better men and women with the help of God's Spirit.

We are not Christians for our own purposes. We are Christians for God's purposes. Many of these purposes are possibly quite unknown to you. He adopts us to be his children and to receive His wisdom as to how to live our lives each and every day to accomplish His will. By gradually integrating the wisdom of God into our lives, submitting to that wisdom, our lives begin to take on a richer and more joyful quality. This is what men and women are meant to be like! Bringing our lives into line with God is not just for ourselves, but for others to be encouraged and strengthened. You can

begin to see that your life is your mission. As you continue to follow you begin to see patterns, begin to see how things were somehow meant to be. It all happened the way it did for a reason, even the heartbreaks! Maybe you are raising a grandchild you weren't expecting to raise. Maybe you are in a very stressful job situation, or maybe unemployed. Maybe you are single and had not planned to be or married and finding married life more challenging than you thought. Wherever we find ourselves, God is there with us and ready to help us live through these days and to live them with the dignity and peace that alone God can give.

The Tham Luang cave rescue in Thailand can serve as a kind of parable for us. The 12 boys and their assistant coach seeking safety went further and further up into the cave and became trapped, cut off from all they loved. The rescue effort drew a variety of different people from many nations with different skills each one contributing what they could to the effort. Local people provided food, cleaned toilets, and supported the rescue effort. Millions of people prayed. A former Thai Navy seal volunteer diver, Saman Gunan, gave his life while carrying oxygen cannisters along the route the trapped boys and their coach ultimately took. One grandfather said after the rescue, "It's like they have died and now have been reborn". We have been chosen to be part of God's great rescue mission in Jesus Christ to save all who may be trapped in the darkness and are cut off from the light of His love and truth.

Bl. John Henry Newman:

**God has created me to do Him some definite service. He has committed some work to me which He has not committed to another. I have my mission. I may never know it in this life, but I shall be told it in the next. I am a link in a chain, a bond of connection between persons. He has not created me for naught. I shall do good; I shall do His work. I shall be an angel of peace, a preacher of truth in my own place, while not intending it if I do but keep His commandments. Therefore, I will trust Him, whatever I am, I can never be thrown away. If I am in sickness, my sickness may serve Him, in perplexity, my perplexity may serve Him. If I am in sorrow, my sorrow may serve Him. He does nothing in vain. He knows what He is about. He may take away my friends. He may throw me among strangers. He may make me feel desolate, make my spirits sink, hide my future from me. Still, He knows what He is about.**