

July 11, 2021

Am 7:12-15; Eph 1:3-14 (1:3-10, short); Mk 6:7-13

What do I need? Ever asked yourself that question when you are leaving the house to be out for the day, when going to the beach or to a cookout, and especially when going on an overnight or vacation trip. What do I need? What do I need to bring with me? How can I be prepared for what comes? How can I anticipate the needs, and then make sure that I am covered? I did that when I was preparing to go visit our scout troops at camp the week before last. Decided what to wear - it was a rainy day so I wore appropriate shoes and a jacket, brought a hat, thought of everything ... except my umbrella, which I left behind. Fortunately someone loaned me one. We never can fully anticipate every need - and things will always come up that we don't expect - and on top of it, we forget things, and don't always think things through. Maybe we all need someone, or something, beyond ourselves.

Jesus has plan - a great plan made by God that He calls us to be part of. St. Paul talks about this plan to bring all people to union with God: *In all wisdom and insight, he has made known to us the mystery of his will in accord with his favor that he set forth in him as a plan for the fullness of times.* We are called to be part of this plan. Jesus is primarily calling us to a relationship with Himself, one that brings an internal calmness and life of peace on earth - a peace that can only be found in union with Him. He also is calling us to be part of leading others to that place. It only works when we involve ourselves in the big picture. If we think that faith in Jesus, care of neighbor, charity, and the practice of religion is just about us fixing the world ourselves, or a way to a great eternal retirement plan for us and our loved ones - then we're missing the point. Our work to praise God, to perfect ourselves, to elevate the sufferings of others, and also the work to be an example that leads others to Jesus, are all wrapped up in one. Jesus sends disciples out to do His work, not just for their own sake, but to bring others to the truth. This may seem like a task that is beyond what we want or can do, but it is essential. Just remember that Jesus has given each of us gifts, and He does not send disciples out without help.

When He sends disciples out two by two and tells them not to bring money, or a change of clothes, or a bag to carry things in. When He tells them to eat what is given to them, to stay in one house - he is sending an important message. This message is also meant for us who are His

disciples 2000 years later: "If you go where I send you, I will take care of your needs." We can't set out on the journey to follow Jesus without any preparation, we have our own part to play and must study to know the Lord's plans and the ways He has taught us to live. However, we can't be so worried that we have to do it all ourself that we ignore the presence of the special helps that Jesus sends us.

We all struggle to achieve what we think will bring us peace, but Jesus can provide a peace on Earth amid the struggles, and the promise of an eternal peace after death. He wants us to love others as he loves us, not only to be moved to care for their needs and support them in their pain, but also that we love them so much that we want to point them to that peace Jesus provides. If you haven't quite found that peace yet yourself, or are cynical that it can be found - then please keep looking. As I do so it just continues to deepen in my life. The presence of Jesus in the Eucharist, the voice of the Lord speaking to me in prayer and when reading the spiritual masters, all of this helps to strengthen and guide. Amid the most challenging things, Jesus is there to support me; amid the worst of my fears, He is there it give strength; amid my own doubts of my abilities and possibilities for success, He reminds me that it is only in Him that success will be reached. Then a wave of peace sweeps over me.

Jesus supports us in three ways. First, if we have faith, the resources that we truly need become mysteriously available (take no food, or money). Second, he places people in our path that will be of assistance to us (like they were sent out two by two, and they relied on people who opened their home to them and fed them). Finally, there is a supernatural help from the Holy Spirit that guides us in decisions, that gives us courage, and that changes the hearts and minds of people that we cannot reach. Receiving the Eucharist worthily and moving our heart closer to Jesus opens us to this supernatural help that comes from the Lord Himself dwelling in us. If we fight against God's plan and try to impose our own will on the situation - then there is discord, God's plan is not advanced, and a lack of peace follows. However, when we have faith and are following as Jesus taught, when we are removing the things and sins in our life that separate us from Him, when we are working to do as He does, and for the same reasons He does them - then all the supports from Jesus come to us. When this happens, situations move to resolutions that we did not expect, we are cooperators in God's plan, and we are at peace.