

## **Pastor's Page: July 11, 2021**

In this Sunday's gospel reading, Jesus sends the disciples out two by two. He instructs them to preach repentance, cast out demons, and cure the sick. They were leaving the familiar, being with Jesus, and going out into the unknown to share what was given to them. Many of us may not be called to specifically cast out demons or cure the sick, but we are all called to go out and share the love that Christ has given us. Important to note is that the English word "Mass" comes from the Latin word *missa*, which translates as "sent." This is found in the Latin dismissal formula at the end of the liturgy, *Ite missa est*. After receiving the Eucharist, we are sent out "on mission" to be lights for the world; witnessing that we do not live for ourselves, but live for Christ. Pope Francis also underscores this in his apostolic exhortation, *Evangelii Gaudium*: "Every Christian is a missionary to the extent that he or she has encountered the love of God in Christ Jesus: we no longer say that we are 'disciples' and 'missionaries', but rather that we are always 'missionary disciples.'" In virtue of our baptism, we are all called to witness to the world what Jesus has done for us. Missionary discipleship will look differently based on one's vocation, such as if a person is married, single, or in religious life. But ultimately, being sent out means entering the unknown.

Anxiety often comes when we leave the familiar and enter into the unknown. A time of leaving the familiar for me was when I left home for college. I had a feeling of excitement for the future while also missing my family and feeling nervous about what was ahead. There is a comfort with the known rhythm of home in contrast to the surprise interactions and events that happen when we go out. We may have a similar feeling of anxiety when we leave church after Mass and enter into the public arena. But we have nothing to fear, Jesus is with us at every moment.

A question worth asking is how are we to share what we have received? Jesus commands his disciples to cast out demons and cure the sick. Some may be called to do this, but the Responsorial Psalm hints at what all of us might share: "Lord, let us see your kindness, and grant us your salvation." The kindness we receive we can share with others as we go into the unknown. Kindness means recognizing the dignity of every person that we encounter. It is a quality of expressing sympathy or concern, shown through acts of generosity and/or forgiveness. Kindness can be a source of light to others, especially through the polarized, stressful, societal changes that we are experiencing here in the U.S. At the same time, going out to the unknown can be stressful. But, we have nothing to fear, as Christ himself sends us out to share what he has given us.

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