

XIV ORDINARY TIME– 7th July 2019

YOUR PEACE WILL REST UPON HIM – Biblical Commentary by Father Alberto Maggi OSM

Luke 10,1-12,17,20

After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them on ahead of him, two by two, into every town and place where he himself was about to go. And he said to them, “The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few. Therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest. Go your way; behold, I am sending you out as lambs in the midst of wolves. Carry no moneybag, no knapsack, no sandals, and greet no one on the road. Whatever house you enter, first say, ‘Peace be to this house!’ And if a son of peace is there, your peace will rest upon him. But if not, it will return to you. And remain in the same house, eating and drinking what they provide, for the labourer deserves his wages. Do not go from house to house. Whenever you enter a town and they receive you, eat what is set before you. Heal the sick in it and say to them, ‘The kingdom of God has come near to you.’ But whenever you enter a town and they do not receive you, go into its streets and say, ‘Even the dust of your town that clings to our feet we wipe off against you. Nevertheless know this, that the kingdom of God has come near.’ I tell you, it will be more bearable on that day for Sodom than for that town

The seventy-two returned with joy, saying, “Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name!” And he said to them, “I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall hurt you^o Nevertheless, do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.”

After the failure of the mission of the twelve that were too absorbed with nationalistic religious ideology and success, of the primacy of Israel that should have dominated all other populations, Jesus tries again and changes the envoys. Let's read.

“After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others..” Why this number? In the book of Genesis, chapter 10, the gentile populations known at that time were seventy-two. So these come from paganism. In reality they come from the world of Samaria where Jesus recruited these messengers. “..and sent them on ahead of him, two by two, into every town and place where he himself was about to go.” So after the failure of the twelve Jesus tries with others not linked with the nationalist ideology “And he said to them, “The harvest is plentiful,..” The response to the announcement of the good news is an abundant harvest. “..but the labourers are few. Therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest.” The words of Jesus are an invitation to become aware that there is a need for the collaboration of all. Unfortunately in the religious tradition these words have been limited, reserved, therefore making them lose all their substance, to religious vocations.

As if Jesus had thought to ask to send priests, monks and nuns. None of this. Becoming workers of his harvest is an invitation addressed to all. Everyone must collaborate in announcing the good news of Jesus. There are no special or reserved categories. Then Jesus gives directions.

“...I am sending you out as lambs in the midst of wolves.” Jesus warns of the hostility of society, especially of the religious society that sees itself threatened by the announcement of this good news of a different relationship with God.

Then Jesus invites us to have full trust in people. “Carry no moneybag, no knapsack, no sandals, and greet no one on the road.” The urgency of this work of announcing the good news is so important that we must not observe these rules. Then Jesus gives an important indication “Whatever house you enter,..” We must know that in the culture of the time it was not lawful, as Peter says, for a Jew to join or meet with people of other races. It was unthinkable that a Jew should enter the home of a gentile.

Jesus is saying “ We don’t have these scruples or rules “Whatever house you enter, first say, ‘Peace be to this house! It is not an invitation "Peace be in this house", but it is a gift. The disciple is a gift of peace, that is, of happiness.’

“And if a son of peace is there,” that is, a person in tune with this peace “...your peace will rest upon him. But if not, it will return to you.” So it is not lost if there is rejection. Then Jesus returns to insist, we see that it was a problem, and in reality it is also today. “And remain in the same house, eating and drinking what they provide..” Don't have religious scruples, don't make difficulties , don't ask for a particular treatment for religious or ideological reasons.,

“...for the labourer deserves his wages.” And Jesus insists: “ Do not go from house to house.”

Don't make difficulties if there aren't those religious observances or not. And Jesus again goes on to insist: “ Whenever you enter a town and they receive you, eat what is set before you.” This insistence of Jesus on not making difficulties is strange. It is a very current topic, even today there are people who, due to ideologies, modalities or fashions, have food difficulties, do not eat certain foods, discard others. And this creates difficulties for us.

Jesus is saying“ None of this. Eat what is offered, even if it does not enter into your ideal meal”

“Heal the sick in it and say to them, ‘The kingdom of God has come near to you.’ The alternative society has its effect on the physical well-being of the people. Then Jesus warns: "It may be that in society do not welcome you, it does not matter, do not waste time".

This expression of Jesus’: “Even the dust of your town that clings to our feet we wipe off against you.” It was what was done in the land of the gentiles. It was not possible, on entering Israel, to bring anything from the gentile world, which was impure, so they shook their sandals. If someone does not accept this gift of peace, well they are like the gentiles, do not waste time. We see that there are not the necessary conditions to accept this new kingdom.

Well, here is the conclusion “The seventy-two returned with joy, ...” different from the return of the twelve “...saying, “Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name!” They have succeeded in freeing mankind from the false ideologies.

Here is Jesus’ reply: “And he said to them, “I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven.”

At that time Satan was in heaven and in a divine court, as it says in the Book of Job , and he was a sort of inspector general. He came down to earth, spied on men and then accused them to God.

Well, with the announcement of the good news of Jesus, that is, a God who loves, a God who is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked, a God who no longer rewards the good and punishes the bad , as was presented by the religion, but a God who, regardless of their behaviour, communicates and offers his love to all, so the role of Satan has no more reason to exist.

The author of the Apocalypse will then comment: “...for the accuser of our brothers has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God.” (Revelations 12,10) Then Satan lost his role, which is why he plunged to earth. And then Jesus assures that this announcement of

life and these announcers of life will be stronger than all the obstacles, of all the difficulties they can find.

Jesus replies according to the figurative language of the time “*Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions,...*” those who have the poison in themselves and who can poison, “*..and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall hurt you...*”

Therefore Jesus assures the community of believers that, when one is the bearer of an announcement of life, he is a carrier because he has accepted this life and transmits it to others, so there is nothing that can harm or hurt him.