

# Sunday Message

SIXTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

THE WORD

Year B • 21 July 2024 • Psalter Week 4



## GUT FEELING

MARK 6:30-34



Today's Gospel describes the return of the Twelve Jesus had sent out on mission.

The word "apostle" comes from the Greek verb *apostéllō*, which means "to send." They've been sent by Jesus and now are reporting back. But they don't seem to fully understand what has happened. Notice that they tell Jesus about "all that they had done and taught." They have forgotten that they had gone on mission equipped with Jesus' authority, not their own. They haven't understood what it means to be sent by Jesus on a mission. Acting on the basis of their own authority, they haven't operated as followers. Still, they are full of enthusiasm.

Jesus' response to this popular enthusiasm is to invite them away to a deserted place. Jesus is always cautious about popular demonstrations of enthusiasm for his message, because they have the capacity to take his mission in the wrong direction. Time apart in a deserted place will help the apostles to understand more fully the mission they now share with Jesus.

So they set out across the Sea of Galilee by boat. But the plan fails spectacularly. Seeing the boat, people race around the lake to meet Jesus and his friends when they reach land. Mark says the people came "from all the towns" around the lake. This is his way of letting us know just how popular Jesus has become.

Mark says that Jesus "had compassion on them." In Greek the text reads that "he was moved with compassion for them in his inward parts." In the Hebrew way of associating feelings to parts of the body, compassion was always associated with the womb. In the case of men, it was the intestine. In other words, when Jesus sees the people, he has such compassion for them that he feels it in the pit of his stomach. It's a really strong statement of the depth of feeling Jesus has for the people.

His reason for such a strong feeling is that the people "were like sheep without a shepherd." This phrase is used in the Old Testament to describe the people of Israel whenever they suffered from failed or negligent leadership. But Jesus will not fail or neglect God's people. He will be the true shepherd. ■

### DO

Think about your attitude to the person in need, the stranger, the refugee. Would you say that you are compassionate?

### LEARN

Compassion was at the heart of Jesus' ministry. It is key to Gospel living.

Jesus is our true Shepherd.

### PRAY

The biblical phrase "like sheep without a shepherd" describes those suffering from ineffective or defective leadership. Pray for those in authority in our Church, that they will be the kind of leaders we need.

### SAY

**"Lord, help me to be compassionate as you are compassionate. Amen."**

## REFLECT

In 1980, El Salvador was in the middle of such a brutal civil war that the American Peace Corps withdrew their volunteers from the country. They were afraid government death squads would target them. On the day they left, Jean Donovan, an American lay missionary who chose to stay behind, wrote a letter to a friend:

"The Peace Corps left today and my heart sank low. The danger is extreme and they were right to leave... Now I must assess my own position because I am not up for suicide. Several times I have decided to leave El Salvador. I almost could, except for the children, the poor, bruised victims of this insanity. Who would care for them?"

In the early 1970s, Jean spent time in University College Cork as an exchange student, where she met a priest called Michael Crowley. He stirred Jean's

conscience, urging her and other students to give not just money to the poor but also their time and solidarity.

Back home in the States, Jean qualified as an accountant and got engaged. At that time the news was full of stories about the war in El Salvador. Thousands of Salvadorans who opposed the government were being murdered or disappeared. Jean felt compelled to go there as a missionary, and so she trained with the Maryknoll Sisters.

In 1979, she was sent to the town of La Libertad. Alongside Sr Dorothy Kazel, she provided food, medical treatment and shelter to victims of the war. It was dangerous work, made more dangerous after the assassination of San Salvador Archbishop Oscar Romero in March 1980.

In December 1980, Jean and Sr Dorothy drove to the airport to pick up two Maryknoll sisters, Maura Clarke and Ita Ford. As they

returned home on an isolated road, members of the El Salvador military stopped their car. They forced the four women into the jungle, and brutally assaulted and murdered them.

Jean Donovan was only 27 years old when she died. She knew going to El Salvador was dangerous; that staying there was even more dangerous. So why did she do it? Why did she stay when so many others fled? Compassion. She wouldn't - she couldn't - abandon those suffering children.

In today's Gospel, Jesus has compassion on the crowd. This word is used throughout the Gospels to describe Jesus' response to those in need: he had compassion. He had compassion on the sick, the blind, the lepers, the hungry, those mourning loved ones, anyone who was in trouble or in need. And he always acted: to heal, sustain, encourage, nourish, make whole again. Compassion was always Jesus' first response. It must be our first response also. ■

**ENTRANCE ANTIPHON**

See, I have God for my help.  
The Lord sustains my soul.  
I will sacrifice to you with willing heart,  
and praise your name, O Lord, for it is good.

**GLORIA**

Glory to God in the highest,  
and on earth peace to people of good will.

We praise you,  
we bless you,  
we adore you,  
we glorify you,  
we give you thanks for your great glory,  
Lord God, heavenly King,  
O God, almighty Father.

Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,  
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,  
you take away the sins of the world,  
have mercy on us;  
you take away the sins of the world,  
receive our prayer;  
you are seated at the right hand of the Father,  
have mercy on us.

For you alone are the Holy One,  
you alone are the Lord,  
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,  
with the Holy Spirit,  
in the glory of God the Father.  
Amen.

**COLLECT**

Show favour, O Lord, to your servants  
and mercifully increase the gifts of your grace,  
that, made fervent in hope, faith and charity,  
they may be ever watchful in keeping your  
commands.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,  
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the  
Holy Spirit,  
one God, for ever and ever.  
Amen.

**FIRST READING**

Jeremiah 23:1-6

A reading from the prophet Jeremiah.

"Doom for the shepherds who allow the flock  
of my pasture to be destroyed and scattered  
– it is the Lord who speaks! This, therefore, is  
what the Lord, the God of Israel, says about the  
shepherds in charge of my people: You have let  
my flock be scattered and go wandering and  
have not taken care of them.

Right, I will take care of you for your misdeeds  
– it is the Lord who speaks! But the remnant  
of my flock I myself will gather from all the  
countries where I have dispersed them, and will  
bring them back to their pastures: they shall be  
fruitful and increase in numbers. I will raise up  
shepherds to look after them and pasture them;  
no fear, no terror for them anymore; not one  
shall be lost – it is the Lord who speaks!

"See, the days are coming – it is the Lord who  
speaks –  
when I will raise a virtuous Branch for David,  
who will reign as true king and be wise,  
practising honesty and integrity in the land.  
In his days Judah will be saved  
and Israel dwell in confidence.  
And this is the name he will be called:  
The Lord-our-integrity."

The word of the Lord.  
Thanks be to God.

**PSALM**

Psalm 22(23)

Response:

**The Lord is my shepherd: there is nothing I  
shall want.**

- The Lord is my shepherd;  
there is nothing I shall want.  
Fresh and green are the pastures  
where he gives me repose.  
Near restful waters he leads me,  
to revive my drooping spirit. (R.)
- He guides me along the right path;  
he is true to his name.  
If I should walk in the valley of darkness  
no evil would I fear.  
You are there with your crook and your staff;  
with these you give me comfort. (R.)
- You have prepared a banquet for me  
in the sight of my foes.  
My head you have anointed with oil;  
my cup is overflowing. (R.)
- Surely goodness and kindness shall follow  
me  
all the days of my life.  
In the Lord's own house shall I dwell  
for ever and ever. (R.)

**SECOND READING**

Ephesians 2:13-18

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the  
Ephesians.

In Christ Jesus, you that used to be so far apart  
from us have been brought very close, by the  
blood of Christ. For he is the peace between  
us, and has made the two into one and broken  
down the barrier which used to keep them  
apart, actually destroying in his own person the  
hostility caused by the rules and decrees of the  
Law. This was to create one single New Man in  
himself out of the two of them and by restoring  
peace through the cross, to unite them both in a  
single Body and reconcile them with God. In his  
own person he killed the hostility. Later he came  
to bring the good news of peace, peace to you  
who were far away and peace to those who  
were near at hand. Through him, both of us have  
in the one Spirit our way to come to the Father.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

**Alleluia, alleluia! The sheep that belong to me  
listen to my voice, says the Lord,  
I know them and they follow me. Alleluia!**

**GOSPEL**

Mark 6:30-34

A reading from the holy Gospel according to  
Mark.

The apostles rejoined Jesus and told him all  
they had done and taught. Then he said to  
them, "You must come away to some lonely  
place all by yourselves and rest for a while";  
for there were so many coming and going that  
the apostles had no time even to eat. So they  
went off in a boat to a lonely place where they  
could be by themselves. But people saw them  
going, and many could guess where; and from  
every town they all hurried to the place on foot  
and reached it before them. So as he stepped  
ashore he saw a large crowd; and he took pity  
on them because they were like sheep without  
a shepherd, and he set himself to teach them at  
some length.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

**PROFESSION OF FAITH**

I believe in one God,  
the Father almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth,  
of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,  
the Only Begotten Son of God,  
born of the Father before all ages.  
God from God, Light from Light,  
true God from true God,  
begotten, not made, consubstantial with  
the Father;

through him all things were made.  
For us men and for our salvation  
he came down from heaven,

*(all bow during the next three lines)*

and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the  
Virgin Mary,  
and became man.

For our sake he was crucified under  
Pontius Pilate,  
he suffered death and was buried,  
and rose again on the third day  
in accordance with the Scriptures.  
He ascended into heaven  
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.  
He will come again in glory  
to judge the living and the dead  
and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord,  
the giver of life,  
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,  
who with the Father and the Son is adored  
and glorified,  
who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic and  
apostolic Church.

I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness  
of sins  
and I look forward to the resurrection of the  
dead  
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

**PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS**

O God, who in the one perfect sacrifice  
brought to completion varied offerings of the  
law,  
accept, we pray, this sacrifice from your faithful  
servants  
and make it holy, as you blessed the gifts of Abel,  
so that what each has offered to the honour of  
your majesty  
may benefit the salvation of all.  
Through Christ our Lord.  
Amen.

**COMMUNION ANTIPHON**

**The Lord, the gracious, the merciful,  
has made a memorial of his wonders;  
he gives food to those who fear him.**

**PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

Graciously be present to your people, we pray,  
O Lord,  
and lead those you have imbued with heavenly  
mysteries  
to pass from former ways to newness of life.  
Through Christ our Lord.  
Amen.