

Sunday Message

11TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

THE WORD

Year A • 18 June 2023 • Colour: Green • Psalter Week 3

LIKE SHEEP WITHOUT A SHEPHERD

MATT 9:36-10:6



The second of the great sermons in Matthew's Gospel is often called 'the Mission Discourse.' It is addressed to Jesus' close disciples rather than to the crowd at large.

It can be found in chapter 10, and we will read parts of it over the next three Sundays. It begins with a short overture describing the compassion of Jesus for the 'harassed and dejected' crowd, like sheep without a shepherd.

This was literally true of the Galilean peasants of his day. Absentee landlords exploited them, they were taxed to the hilt by an occupying power, and their own local ruler, Herod, was incompetent and corrupt. The image of Israel like a flock without a shepherd is taken from chapter 34 of the prophet Ezekiel. In this long prophecy, Ezekiel lays out the state of the nation. They have been forced into exile by a foreign power, their 'shepherds,' the royal house of David, have lost power with the result that the people ('the sheep') are lost and awaiting a true shepherd who will reunite them. For Ezekiel, this 'new David' was a figure of the future. Jesus, born in the city of David, becomes the good shepherd who will lead them with love and compassion.

The image now shifts to labouring in the harvest. This is a common image in the Gospels for the mission of the Church. Jesus calls the first group of the labourers, the twelve disciples who have been closest to him. They will share his ministry both in preaching and in the works of power. The names of the twelve are then given. The choice of twelve disciples reflects the twelve tribes of the people of Israel. They will be responsible, first of all, for gathering in the harvest of historical Israel and then for widening its boundaries by gathering in the harvest of the Gentiles.

The mission discourse proper begins with a word addressed to the twelve about their immediate mission and a marking off of the mission territory. As fellow-workers with the Lord of the harvest, their mission, like his, will be addressed, first of all, to the Jewish people. For the moment, they are to avoid pagan territory. Neither are they at this stage to engage in mission to the Samaritans. The Samaritans had broken off from the main branch of Judaism many centuries before but had retained the Law and their own priesthood and, for a time, their own temple. There was mutual hostility between the two groups, though Jesus does show concern for Samaritans (e.g. parable of the Good Samaritan, the encounter with a Samaritan woman who not only becomes a believer herself but draws her fellow townsmen and women to him in John 4).

Like Jesus, the twelve's mission will consist of preaching the word that the Kingdom of God is close at hand and performing the same kind of works of power – curing the sick (even

REFLECT

That mission of twelve peasant men in Galilee long ago is the beginning of the Church's mission. Mission is the Church's 'unfinished business' with the world. If the Church ever gets trapped in its own concerns, it has lost its vision of what Jesus has called it to be. Times and mission strategies may have changed but priority must always be given to the simple message that the Kingdom of God is close at hand and that it makes a difference to human life. ■



SAY

"Jesus is the Good Shepherd who shows me the way to salvation."

LEARN

As baptised members of the Church, we all share in its mission to preach the Gospel

The Church is missionary by its very nature

One does not have to travel abroad or even leave home to be a missionary

DO

Think about your baptismal calling. What does it mean to you? How committed are you to witnessing to the Gospel?

PRAY

Pray for people who are oppressed and exploited throughout the world, as the people of Israel were in the time of Jesus

Parishes of Dromara and Drumgooland

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18th June 2023
11th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Weekend masses

Sat 6:00pm Dechomet
7:30pm Leitrim
Sun 9:00am Gargory
11:00am Dromara

Masses this week

Wed 21st 7:30pm Leitrim
Fri 23rd 7:30pm Dromara

I will be on retreat 12th – 21st June.

For any emergency sick calls or deaths please try

Fr Brian Brown on 074 9673 1619.

I will have my mobile phone turned off.

Recently Deceased

Rosaleen Turley, Dechomet

ANNIVERSARIES

DECHOMET

Sat 17th Kathleen & Matt Ward and
Deceased Family Members

Sat 24th James O'Hare

LEITRIM

Sat 17th Bernadette Savage

Wed 21st Seamus Gribben

Sat 24th PF & Mary Rose McCartan
Michael McElroy
Sam Duggan

GARGORY

Sun 18th Noel King

DROMARA

Sun 25th Maureen McCann MM
Hugh McCoubry (Derry)

SVDP: Drom 07738838191/Drumg 07825419067

Safeguarding Contact: P Carville 07789917741

Collections	Dromara	Drumgooland
Parish	£ 371	£766

Drumgooland Parish Council Meeting
Mon 26th June at 8pm

*Congratulations to
Elaine Madine and Ruairi O'Hare
who were married recently*



*We welcome into Dromara Parish
Cliona Maire McKay*



*Dromore Diocesan
Historical Society*

Mon 26th June 7:00pm

*The Society will host an outing and
talk by Jim Conway entitled
"Druid settlements to Monastic settlements:
the mythologies of Lough Neagh"
at the Discovery Centre,
Oxford Island,
Craigavon BT66 6NJ.
All welcome*