

St Pius & St Anthony 14th Sunday Ordinary Time Year C(2025) Luke

What a mission? Go 1) preach the kingdom of God to all, 2) cure/comfort the sick you meet, 3) proclaim peace to every household; but take nothing along with you! Okay! In institutional offices, like corporations or government, getting a memo from headquarters like that policy, is what we call ‘unfunded mandates’- new jobs without any additional resources as a means to accomplish new tasks. The disciples may have thought that is what was being laid on them today! But in fact the disciples will have all they need if they trust and go – it is Jesus. He’ll provide all they need, maybe just not ever before it is actually needed. First trust, and then everything else will fall into place!

I hear an echo in this commissioning scene, almost an anniversary-scene renewal of their first call – when they first met Jesus and he called them to leave what they were doing and follow Him – recall Peter, Andrew, James and John leaving boats and nets, to follow Jesus (Mk 1:16-20). Or Matthew stepping up and leaving behind his tax collection office and position (Matt 9:9). This mission seems like a ritual re-enactment of their first call – set aside what you are holding/doing, and go where I lead – and, by the way, take nothing with you!

Let’s recall his list of what NOT to take – (how about--anything). But Jesus does specify: “take no money bag, no sack (of anything) and no sandals”(Lk 10:4)

I don’t know if you have flown recently, but doesn’t that list sound like TSA checkpoint requirement: *Surrender your wallet(or purse), shoes and bag in the tub* for scanning before walking through the search gate!

Well, an interesting connection here is that some scripture scholars point out that in Jesus’ time, there were similar command-prohibition on these items, For when you entered the Temple! At the door (maybe a sign-‘no purses, bags or sandals’! Check in-give up)-your own resources, they are never needed inside Temple). So, by Jesus sending out the disciples with the same instructions that were printed over top the door to the Temple, He was saying, “All the world, anywhere you go out there, God made it and it is Holy, so live there in the world in the same way you’d conduct yourself standing in the very sanctuary/facing God Himself in the Temple!” Everywhere becomes the Temple – Treat everyone with the same kindness and charity that you treat people in the Temple! And their announcement claim “Kingdom of God is near-here!” is another way of saying that!

But another dimension to Jesus’ command to take nothing along with us on mission in His Name, is about the intense focus and single-minded attention needed to keep on task! No distractions! Only the Mission on your mind!

Reminds me of my football coach back in elementary school. We all showed up for practice and he came to us straight from work (he ran a mechanic shop). As we grouped around him, one time before practice, he always had pockets full of change that he would jingle and one of the guys said, “You could

buy cokes for each of us with all that” and he said “Sure go get them.” I know that doesn’t sound like much of a treat today, but back then- that was something! But it delayed practice for a bit, and then he said “Bottoms up-finish them and let’s get to work.” Well, I thought, “I don’t want to waste this-still had half-can left” and thinking about chugging it all- so cold and carbonated right before calisthenics workout didn’t sound wise. So, I set it down acting like it was tossed aside but my eye on it, and we lined up in our rows to do warmups. First, jumping jacks, then pushups, then sit-ups, then leg lifts--we called them belly-burns because we had to hold them elevated till he blew whistle to lower them--and then we ran in place and would jump down to ground and back up when he whistled and that was my opportunity. One ground jump I reached over and grabbed and turned up can, and pf course, that was when he turned around, and he gave me the spinning hand gesture, which meant ‘take laps’. His discipline was you had to run the outside perimeter of the whole set of ball fields-at least a half mile. But I got it: Coach Paul’s point: He’d said, “Leave it behind. Now, focus on the field. Get into the game! Anything we drag along, baggage, will pull us back into its maintenance work, instead of mission and new outreach service.

But in addition to being so single mindedly focused and attentive to the task before them, on this disciple mission, I like to emphasize the powerful drawing or attractive (recruiting) effect of the disciples’ life as Jesus sent them out with nothing. Think of the witness value of their example. They show up at towns & villages with nothing. Nothing, no tricks or gimmicks, but only the message of God’s Kingdom, the Good News Gospel we say, and their willingness to heal comfort the sick and to proclaim peace. That had to have a powerful effect *(maybe somewhat like when you run across someone, and surprisingly learn, “You don’t have a phone, the house doesn’t have TV, how do you get by without a car?”)* These disciples on mission, show up with nothing, yet they are filled with the joy of Jesus, they are helpful, they exude and bring peace, and willingness to serve with anything, for the sake of their Master Jesus. What Trust! And God takes care of them! Jesus had commanded, “Don’t be particular about what you eat, don’t be picky about where you stay, don’t get caught up in any controversy” Simply, proclaim peace, help and serve everyone, comfort the afflicted and heal the hurting. Announce to all ‘God is Near’. Everyone’s invited to enter His Kingdom I visualize the disciples showing up in a village, like reporting for duty, “Do you all need a new water well dug, help is here?” “Do your crops need harvesting, use us while you got us?” “How about clearing that field for you, or repairing that trench Here, these happy and helpful Christian disciples show up; not imposing, not pressuring, nothing to sell you or take from you. Only announcing the Kingdom of God, Jesus’ Life and following Him. Bringing peace and offering healing. Imagine,

the recruiting effect of such a serene lifestyle. Such peace and contentment in them from Christ.

Jesus had sent them out as advance teams, preparing for his soon to show appearance, and I bet it was quite the opener for his ministry. I bet towns receiving the disciples were hungry for more, asking, “What motivates you to be this way-so joy-filled, such helpful servants?” That had to be such a draw, a stimulus, making people say, “Take me to your leader” or “I want in, pass me some of what you are having.” And it was Jesus behind it all. He gave the disciples all they needed. And He gives us all we need, if we trust, if we go with Him, if we follow and let Him lead us. Do we?

Isaiah 55:2 “Why spend, yourself, on what does not satisfy?”

Matthew 11:28-29 “Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart; and you will find rest for yourselves.”