



## Called to Mission

Mark 6:1-13

*They went out and preached  
that people should repent.*

*They drove out many demons and anointed  
many sick people with oil and healed them.*

July 5, 2015

## Thought for the Week

### The Ministry of Jesus

*“How do we, today, follow the call and summons of Jesus  
to seek out the stranger, heal the sick and welcome the weary?”*

Christ calls all people to himself. Throughout his public ministry, the Lord Jesus welcomed the stranger, healed the sick, offered forgiveness and expressed his eagerness to give rest to the weary and burdened. How do we, today, follow the call and summons of Jesus to seek out the stranger, heal the sick, and welcome the weary? The Community of Christ wants us to experience the urgent vigilance of the father of the prodigal son so that as we anxiously await the return of missing family and friends, we will be ready to run to greet and embrace them.

Today, through the ministry of the Church, Jesus continues to call all people to himself. It is estimated that only a small percentage of U.S. Christians attend church each week. Those absent from the Communion of Christ each week are not strangers: they are our parents, siblings, spouses, children, and friends. According to a recent study, the most common reasons given by Christians who do not regularly attend services are not related to controversial issues. The reasons given instead point to a gradual slipping away from the faith. Most Christians stop attending church because they (1) have busy schedules or a lack of time, (2) have family responsibilities, (3) have health problems or disabilities, (4) have conflicts with work, (5) do not believe missing church is meaningful, or (6) believe that they are not very religious people. In other words, many of our brothers and sisters have simply drifted away from the Church. This is due in part to the busyness of modern life and to a changing culture. There are also Christians who attend church on a regular basis but who feel unconnected to the church community. The reasons for not attending church highlighted in this document also point to an increased secularization, materialism, and individualism.

Secularism influences all aspects of society, claiming religion is merely a private matter. But only when their faith permeates every aspect of their lives do Christians become truly open to the transforming power of the Gospel. Materialism also presents an obstacle to Christ. The ability to acquire limitless

goods and an overreliance on science create a false sense of hope that we alone can fulfill our deepest needs. However, without God, our deepest needs cannot be fulfilled. *“Without God, who alone bestows upon us what we by ourselves cannot attain, our lives are ultimately empty. People need to be constantly reminded to cultivate a relationship with Jesus Christ that we might have life in abundance.”* Individualism leads to harmful forms of freedom and autonomy. After all, *“we were created as social beings that find fulfillment only in love-for God and for our neighbor.”* Our personal relationship with Christ does not hinder our participation in the Community of Christ.

In addition, there is an unsettling ignorance of the “Communion” of Christ as well as an erosion of Sunday as the Lord’s Day dedicated to prayer and rest. The reasons that Christians cite for missing church can be met and overcome by a Community of Christ that fosters a welcoming environment for adolescents, young adults, singles, married couples, parents, families, the sick or disabled, and anyone who is no longer active in the faith. The means for fostering a welcoming environment is the new evangelization. The evangelization places a special emphasis on welcoming back to the Lord’s Table all those who are absent, because they are greatly missed and needed to build up the Body of Christ.

The new evangelization is a call to each person to deepen his or her own faith, have confidence in the Gospel, and possess a willingness to share the Gospel. It is a personal encounter with the person of Jesus, which brings peace and joy. The new evangelization provides the lens through which people experience the Community of Christ and the world around them. By taking up the call, we will do as Paul commands us: “Welcome one another, then, as Christ welcomed you.”

## Stewardship Thoughts

Our personal stewardship should be the grateful and responsible use of God's gifts in the light of God's purpose as revealed in Jesus Christ. Christian stewards, empowered by the Holy Spirit, should commit themselves to conscious, purposeful decisions.

Our Stewardship is lived out in:

- living and telling the Good News - witnessing by example and in discussions with other people.
- sharing with God in seeking justice, peace, and the integrity of creation in an interdependent universe - going about our everyday lives encouraging just causes (big & small); professing peace with all you encounter, not just verbally but in your every action; and maintaining integrity in all we do because what we do affects everyone in this global & far reaching life we live.
- wisely employing God-given human resources, abilities, and relationships – encouraging the efficient use of all resources at our disposal; recognizing our limitations and sharing our resources so others may help where we cannot.
- sharing the material resources we hold and giving them in service, justice, and compassion - using our Christian mores to share with others in need from our abundance. Doing this sharing knowing that this is only just and that we are echoing Christ’s compassion.
- providing for future generations – using forethought and restraint for the sake of future generations
- sharing in the life, worship, and responsible stewardship of the Church and of its mission.

Both for the individual and for the community, stewardship is a joyful act for the sake of God's world. The mission of our priesthood members is to provide the tools for members to develop the financial resources that under gird their own mission and ministry. Thinking not in term of what we can afford, but in terms of what we need.

It is also our responsibility to continually remind the members in our Community of Christ, that all that we are and all that we have belongs to God. Everything is a gift from God and we are the stewards - not only of our financial resources, but also of this created earth, our time, our talents, our families, our relationships, life itself, but most importantly God's word.

