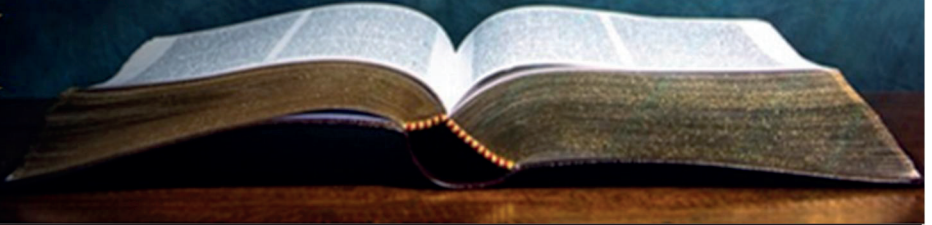


From the PASTOR'S DESK



Calling and Sending

Many listeners to today's Gospel automatically associate it with the ordained ministry. We are asking the Master of the Harvest for the gift of more priests. At every parish, the prayers of the faithful are being offered for an increase in deacons and priests. We know the urgency.

With this Gospel before us we need to reflect. What is laboring in the harvest about? What does it mean to be called, to be sent, to work in the Lord's harvest?

What strikes us first is the Lord's generosity. Without His grace, there would be no harvest. His planting in the souls of the faithful produces the fruit of any ministry. Generously, He makes the harvest ours, too. He associates us with what is His work.

Jesus tells the disciples to pray for workers to join Him in His labor. He wants co-workers who will work with Him to proclaim God's reign, to heal, to comfort, and to suppress the forces of evil. The Son of God gives imperfect creatures a share in His recreating work. Looking at it this way, calling for those to be sent is no less a share in the work than actually being sent.

There is a curious interdependence in being sent and being called. Might it be that what one person hears when called to ordination is not only a still, small voice speaking in the heart, but also the countless voices in the prayers of the faithful responding to the Lord's need for laborers? Jesus almost makes it sound as though there will be no more laborers until there are more prayers for laborers.

On the other hand, there is no reason to think that the laborers called to the harvest are exclusively those called to the ordained ministry. The passage is silent on their identity.

That's probably as it should be. The overwhelming number of workers in the harvest have been anonymous. Men and women living their faith as spouses, parents, workers, "pray-ers," - and in innumerable ways - co-workers in the proclamation of the Kingdom. The faithful are both the abundance in the harvest and tireless workers.

This Gospel belongs to the whole people of God. While the faithful call for the commissioning and empowering of ministers, the priests and deacons pray that the Lord sends prayerful, supportive laborers to work with them in His harvest. The Lord sends us.

Fr. Hernan Cely

Pastor

