

18 October 2024 - Feast of Saint Luke

[2 Tim 4:10-17b; Lk 10:1---9](#)

### Homily

In the Gospel, we have two versions of Jesus' sending out on mission: the first, common to the three synoptic Gospels, is addressed to the twelve Apostles; the other, longer version, which we have just read and which is specific to Luke, is addressed to the seventy-two disciples.

Jesus wants all his missionaries - all his disciples - to be genuine pilgrims, that is to say, people who are totally committed to their mission, who go straight ahead, looking ahead, without being distracted by anything interesting they may encounter along the way: 'Take no money, no bag, no sandals, and do not linger in greetings on the road'.

The person who has arrived at this inner freedom, who has reconciled himself with his personal poverty, is a person filled with peace who can therefore transmit peace to others. 'In every house you enter, first say, 'Peace to this house. If there is a friend of peace there, your peace will rest on him; if not, it will return to you'. Peace is shared between free people. Those who do not have this freedom, who are still slaves to their own desires, are often a source of tension if not conflict. Luke, who accompanied Paul on his missionary journeys, was one of these pilgrims, one of these poor people.

This message applies not only to preachers of the Gospel, but to all disciples, including us monks. Let's remember that in last Sunday's Gospel Jesus called for radical detachment on the part of anyone who wanted to follow Him: 'Let the dead bury their dead; as for you, go and proclaim the Kingdom of God'. To be rooted - rooted in Christ - you need to be free of other ties. This is the vocation not only of those who are called to preach the Good News, but also of ascetics who are called to live in solitude.

At the beginning of his Rule, Saint Benedict speaks of the various categories of monks. He mentions cenobites (those who practice communal life), for whom he writes his Rule, and hermits, for whom he has great respect when they are genuine. He also speaks of 'gyrovagues', a word that designates people who constantly move from one place to another, moved not by the Spirit of God but by their whims and instincts.

Document extrait du [site de l'abbaye Notre-Dame de Scourmont](#), qui se trouve sur le territoire de Forges, à sept kilomètres au sud de la ville de Chimay, en Belgique. Notre-Dame de Scourmont est une abbaye de l'Ordre Cistercien de la Stricte Observance.

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There is, however, a radical difference between the gyrovagues of which Benedict speaks and pilgrims. Whereas a gyrovague is rootless, and for that reason cannot grow, the authentic pilgrim is a person firmly rooted. Either he has a home from which he leaves and to which he will return at the end of his pilgrimage; or, if he has adopted a life of perpetual pilgrimage (which was the first form of Christian monasticism, in Syria), he has found sufficient inner roots to dispense with the support of geographical and cultural roots. If 'stability' in a place and in a community has become a characteristic dimension of Benedictine monasticism, the dimension of a continuous spiritual journey also remains essential.

This message may seem a little austere. But in this commitment to the person of Christ and to the mission received from Him, there is also a profound joy - a joy that is in proportion to the radicalism of the gift of self. This is well expressed in the first reading, from the Book of Isaiah, where Jerusalem, the figure of Christ, is described in very tender terms as a mother full of love, who feeds her children from her bosom, carries them in her arms and caresses them on her lap.

The harvest is plentiful. As Jesus asked, let us pray to the Lord of the harvest to send laborers into his vineyard. Above all, let us cultivate within ourselves the poverty, detachment and freedom that are necessary for every person who has been called and sent on mission.

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