

18 September 2026 - Friday of the 24th week

1 Cor 15, 12-20; Luke 8:1-3

Homily

These three short verses, which seem somewhat innocuous, shed a great deal of light on Jesus' ministry and the lifestyle he adopted with his disciples. This lifestyle had little in common with the rabbinical schools of the time, where disciples could gather around a teacher to receive training, but in a specific place and without participating in the teacher's mission. It was also different from that of the prophets of the Old Testament, who may have had one or two disciples (such as Elisha, Elijah's disciple), but not a group travelling with them.

After his baptism by John, Jesus adopted the lifestyle of an itinerant ascetic and broke many taboos of Jewish society at that time. He went not only to the cities, where the rabbinical schools and the brotherhoods of Pharisees or Sadducees were located, and where the doctors of the Law could be found, but also to the villages, despised by the people in power (*'What good can come out of a small town like Nazareth?!'*). Moreover, he travelled with women, among whom were those whom he had healed of illnesses and demonic possessions, and others who, through their marriages, were compromised by the Roman occupation administration and, through their wealth, were probably of the class of publicans. A fine collection of people considered marginal by the Jewish authorities of the time.

The first Christian communities were equally diverse groups of people from all classes and backgrounds. It was therefore to be expected that conflicts would arise in such groups. We know from the Gospel that even in Jesus' time, such conflicts arose among the Apostles, who sometimes argued about which of them would be the greatest in the Kingdom of Jesus. It is to such conflicts that Paul alludes in his letter to his disciple Timothy, where he reveals the bad temper that is often found in his writings. He is aware that he received his teaching directly from Christ and is rather impatient with anyone who teaches otherwise or questions his authority. We have an example of this in the few verses we have just read.

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