

11th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME; Cycle – A; June 14th 2026
Exodus 19: 2-6; Romans 5: 6-11; Matthew 9: 36-10: 8

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

If we want to summarize the Old Testament in the shortest possible verse, we can do it in a few words; **the unfailing love and compassion of God for Israel and the ever failing fidelity of Israel on the other side.**” The Book of Exodus alone testifies the unconditional love and kindness of God. God worked mighty miracles to save his people from the bondage in Egypt and brought them out in his palms. Just two verses in today’s first reading alone are witness to the greatness of God. God says through Moses, **“I bore you up on eagle wings and brought you here to myself. You shall be to me a kingdom of priests and holy nations. Therefore, if you hearken my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my special possession, dearer to me than all other people.”** (Ex. 19:4-5). God showed the same love and compassion to Israel even when they left Him and went after foreign gods and worship. **In the Old Testament the word love occurs 714 times and the word compassion appears over 100 times.** Most of the times, they are mentioned as the attributes of God. When God chose Israel as a special possession, He also had a great purpose in mind that Israel should be the role model to gentiles and thus they should glorify the name of God.

Though God tried through great Prophets to bring His people back to fidelity, the people didn’t keep God’s covenant at all. Finally God sent his only Son to Israel to restore them back to faith. Jesus started his mission single handed and in course of time he formed a small group of men whom he named the apostles. In today’s gospel reading we see for the first time the names of those 12 men and their first mission. It is amazing to notice how Jesus made a Kingdom and holy nation for God through this small group. They acted as salt and light of the world and today the Kingdom, the Church, they built is bigger than any other material kingdoms on earth.

As we heard in the gospel, we see the first commissioning of the apostles for evangelization work. Before Jesus introduces them to the great task of evangelization he looks at the great crowd around him with love and compassion, at the same time laments over their helplessness. Matthew says, **“At the sight of the crowds, Jesus’ heart was moved with pity for them because they were troubled and abandoned, like sheep without a shepherd.”** The reason was that the religious leaders of that time never had time for the ordinary people and they were not good shepherds. So people were abandoned and Jesus sends his 12 men among these people to bring them back to the sheepfold. Jesus conferred his priesthood upon them. According to Matthew during the

time of Jesus the apostles got only one such chance to preach and we don't know how successful the mission was.

In fact, after the Pentecost the entire situation changes and we know how fast the Kingdom started growing. But the evangelization work was not an easy task due to the persecution which started first in Palestine and then it became severe and widespread in Rome. We may wonder what the secret of the strong growth of Christianity was, despite among such cruel torture of three centuries. Of course, the work of the Holy Spirit was with the early Church. At the same time we notice the great role of the ordinary people or the laity during that time. In other words, every Christian was an evangelizer no matter, where he/she lived. People lived in one heart and mind to preach the gospel which helped the steady growth of the Church.

The introduction of ministerial priesthood was a big help for the pastoral and spiritual care of the people. During that time the missionaries also came up in great numbers travelling all over the world evangelizing the people. In a way we can say that the first 1700 years were the golden era of evangelization. At the same time the evangelization work suffered a setback behind the curtain. In other words, seeing the great number of missionary priests the lay people who were active evangelizers became inactive and became totally passive in the Church. Unfortunately, today the missionary flow became very slow.

Today the lamentation of Jesus became once again absolutely true. **“The harvest is abundant, but the laborers are few.”** The situation all over the world is worse. There was a time the missionaries went from America and Europe to Asian and African countries for evangelization work. But today missionaries are coming here from those countries. Even our Diocese heavily depends on Indian and African missionaries to keep the parishes to survive. But we need priests from the children of the Diocese. The parents need to promote vocation, which may be a little sacrifice from them. The bishop cannot keep the churches open unless the families give him priests. So you need to promote the priesthood as well as pray very ardently for vocations. If one parish can provide at least one candidate for priesthood, our churches will remain open. I am happy that our parish has given at least three priests to the service.