

# **FIFTEENTH WEEK IN ORDINARY TIME**

**14-20 July 2024**

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- Sun**     **The Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time**  
**July 14** **JESUS SENDS THE TWELVE APOSTLES OUT ON A MISSION**  
From the Homily of Pope Benedict, 15 July 2012
- Mon.**    **Memorial, St. Bonaventure**  
**15**       **ST BONAVENTURE OF BAGNOREGIO, OFM**  
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- Tues.**    **Memorial, Our Lady of Mount Carmel**  
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A Reflection by Thomas Keating, OCSO
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By Jean-Pierre de Caussade, S.J.

*Sunday*

## **JESUS SENDS THE TWELVE APOSTLES OUT ON A MISSION**

### **From the Homily of Pope Benedict, 15 July 2012**

In this Sunday's Gospel Jesus takes the initiative of sending the Twelve Apostles out on mission (cf. Mk 6:7-13). In fact the term "apostles" means, precisely, "messengers" or "envoys". Their vocation was to be fully achieved only after Christ's Resurrection with the gift of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. Yet it is very significant that Jesus wants to involve the Twelve in his action from the outset: it is a sort of "apprenticeship" with a view to the great responsibility that awaited them. The fact that Jesus calls certain disciples to collaborate directly in his mission demonstrates one aspect of his love, namely, he does not spurn the help that other people can contribute to his work; he knows their limitations, their weaknesses, but bears no contempt for them. On the contrary Jesus confers on them the dignity of being his envoys. He sends them out two by two and gives them instructions which the Evangelist sums up in a few sentences. The first concerns the spirit of detachment: the Apostles must not be attached to money or to other comforts. Then Jesus warns the disciples that they will not always receive a favorable welcome. Sometimes they will be rejected; they might even be persecuted. However, this must not frighten them: they must speak in Jesus' name and preach the Kingdom of God without being worried about whether or not they will succeed. Succeed — its success must be left to God.

The First Reading presents us with the same perspective, showing us that all too often God's messengers are not well received. This is the case of the Prophet Amos whom God sent to prophesy in the Sanctuary at Bethel, a sanctuary of the Kingdom of Israel (cf. Amos 7:12-15). Amos preached very energetically against injustices, denouncing in particular the abuses of kings and notables, abuses of power that offend the Lord and nullify acts of worship. Amaziah, the priest of Bethel, therefore ordered Amos to leave. Amos answered that it was not he who chose this mission but that the Lord had made him a prophet and sent him to this very place in the Kingdom of Israel. Therefore, whether he was accepted or rejected, he would continue to prophesy, preaching whatever God told him and not what men wished to hear. And this has continued to be the Church's mandate: she does not preach what the powerful wish to hear. Her criterion is truth and justice even if it is unpopular and against human power.

Likewise in the Gospel Jesus warns the Twelve that in some places they may be rejected. Should this be the case, they are to go elsewhere, having shaken the dust from their feet in public. This sign expresses detachment in two senses: moral detachment — as if to say it is you who have refused the proclamation offered to you — and material detachment. We did not seek and do not want anything for ourselves (cf. Mk 6:11).

The other very important instruction in the Gospel passage is that the Twelve must not be content with preaching conversion. They must accompany their preaching, in accordance with Jesus' instructions and example, with care for the sick, with caring for those who are sick in body and in spirit. It speaks of the healing of illnesses and also of driving out demons, that is, of purifying the human mind, cleansing, cleansing the eyes of the soul that are clouded by ideologies and hence cannot see God, cannot see truth and justice. This twofold corporal and spiritual healing is always the mandate of Christ's disciples. Hence the apostolic mission must always include the two aspects of preaching God's word and of showing his goodness in gestures of charity, service and dedication.

Monday

## **ST BONAVENTURE OF BAGNOREGIO, OFM**

### **From the Angelus Message of Pope Benedict, 15 July 2012**

Today, 15 July, in the liturgical calendar is the Memorial of St Bonaventure of Bagnoregio, a Franciscan, Doctor of the Church and the successor of St Francis of Assisi at the helm of the Order of Friars Minor. It was he who wrote the first official biography of the "Poverello" and, at the end of his life, he was also Bishop of this Diocese of Albano.

Bonaventure wrote in one of his letters: "I confess before God that the reason which made me most love the life of Blessed Francis is that it resembles the birth and development of the Church" (*Epistula de tribus quaestionibus*, in *Opere di San Bonaventura. Introduzione generale*, Rome 1990, p. 29). These words refer us directly to this Sunday's Gospel which presents the first occasion on which Jesus sent the Twelve Apostles out on mission. Jesus "called to him the Twelve", St Mark recounts, "and began to send them out two by two.... He charged them to take nothing for their journey except a staff; no bread, no bag, no money in their belts; but to wear sandals and not put on two tunics" (Mk 6:7-9). After his conversion Francis of Assisi practiced this Gospel to the letter, becoming a very faithful witness of Jesus; and, uniquely bound to the mystery of the Cross, was transformed into "another Christ", exactly as St Bonaventure describes him.

Jesus Christ is the inspiring center of St Bonaventure's entire life and likewise of his theology. We rediscover this centrality of Christ in the Second Reading of today's Mass (Eph 1:3-14), the famous hymn of St Paul's Letter to the Ephesians that begins: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places". The Apostle thus shows in the four passages, that all begin with the same words: "in him", with reference to Jesus, how this plan of blessing was brought about. "In him", the Father chose us before the creation of the world; "in him" we have redemption through his blood; "in him" we became his heirs, predestined to live "for the praise of his glory"; "in him" all those who believe in the Gospel receive the seal of the Holy Spirit. This Pauline hymn contains the vision of history that St Bonaventure helped to spread in the Church: the whole of history is centered on Christ, who also guarantees in every era new things and renewal. In Jesus, God said and gave all things, but since he is an inexhaustible treasure, the Holy Spirit never ceases to reveal and to actualize his mystery. So it is that the work of Christ and of the Church never regresses but always progresses.

*Tuesday*

## **The story of Our Lady of Mount Carmel**

Hermits lived on Mount Carmel near the fountain of Elijah in Northern Israel in the 12<sup>th</sup> century. They had a special chapel dedicated to our Lady. By the 13<sup>th</sup> century, they became known as “Brothers of Our Lady of Mount Carmel”. They soon celebrated a special Mass and Office in honor of Mary. In 1726, it became a celebration of the universal Church under the title of Our Lady of Mount Carmel. For centuries the Carmelites have seen themselves as specially related to Mary. Their great saints and theologians have promoted devotion to her and often championed the mystery of her Immaculate Conception.

Saint Teresa of Avila called Carmel “the Order of the Virgin”. Saint John of the Cross credited Mary with saving him from drowning as a child, thus leading him to Carmel, and helping him escape from prison. Saint Therese of the Child Jesus believed that Mary cured her from illness. On her First Communion day, Therese dedicated her life to Mary. During the last days of her life, she frequently spoke to Mary.

There is a tradition that Mary appeared to Saint Simon Stock, a leader of the Carmelites, and gave him a scapular, telling him to promote devotion to it. The scapular is a modified version of Mary’s own garment. It symbolizes her special protection and calls the wearers to consecrate themselves to her in a special way. The scapular reminds us of the Gospel call to prayer and penance - a call that Mary models in a splendid way.

The Carmelites were known from early on as “Brothers of our Lady of Mount Carmel”. The title suggests that they saw Mary as Mother and as sister. The word “sister” is a reminder that Mary is very close to us. She is the daughter of God and therefore can help us to be authentic daughters and sons of God. She also helps us to grow in appreciation of being sisters and brothers to one another. She leads us to a new realization that all human beings belong to the family of God. When such a conviction grows, there is hope that the human race can find its way to peace.

Wednesday

## THE “JEWEL” OF THE CRY OF EXULTATION

From the General Audience Address of Pope Benedict, 7 December 2011

The Evangelists Matthew and Luke (cf. Mt 11:25-30 and Lk 10:21-22) have handed down to us a “jewel” of Jesus’ prayer that is often called the *Cry of Exultation* or the *Cry of Messianic Exultation*. It is a prayer of thanksgiving and praise, as we have heard. In the original Greek of the Gospels, the word with which this jubilation begins and which expresses Jesus’ attitude in addressing the Father is *exomologoumai*, which is often translated with “I praise” (cf. Mt 11:25 and Lk 10:21). However, in the New Testament writings this term indicates mainly two things: the first is “to confess” fully — for example, John the Baptist asked those who went to him to be baptized *to recognize their every sin* (cf. Mt 3:6); the second thing is “to be in agreement”. Therefore, the words with which Jesus begins his prayer contain his *full recognition* of the Father’s action and at the same time, his being in *total, conscious and joyful agreement* with this way of acting, with the Father’s plan. The “Cry of Exultation” is the apex of a journey of prayer in which Jesus’ profound and close communion with the life of the Father in the Holy Spirit clearly emerges and his divine sonship is revealed.

Jesus addresses God by calling him “Father”. This word expresses Jesus’ awareness and certainty of being “the Son” in intimate and constant communion with him, and this is the central focus and source of every one of Jesus’ prayers. We see it clearly in the last part of the hymn which illuminates the entire text. Jesus said: “All things have been delivered to me by my Father; and no one knows who the Son is except the Father, or who the Father is except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him” (Lk 10:22). Jesus was therefore affirming that only “the Son” truly knows the Father.

All the knowledge that people have of each other — we all experience this in our human relationships — entails involvement, a certain inner bond between the one who knows and the one who is known, at a more or less profound level: we cannot know anyone without a communion of being. In the *Cry of Exultation* — as in all his prayers — Jesus shows that true knowledge of God presupposes communion with him. Only by being in communion with the other can I begin to know him; and so it is with God: only if I am in true contact, if I am in communion with him, can I also know him. True knowledge, therefore, is reserved to the “Son”, the Only Begotten One who is in the bosom of the Father since eternity (cf. Jn 1:18), in perfect unity with him. The Son alone truly knows God, since he is in an intimate communion of being; only the Son can truly reveal who God is.

The name “Father” is followed by a second title, “Lord of heaven and earth”. With these words, Jesus sums up faith in creation and echoes the first words of Sacred Scripture: “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth” (Gen 1:1).

In praying, he recalls the great biblical narrative of the history of God’s love for man that begins with the act of creation. Jesus fits into this love story, he is its culmination and its fulfillment. Sacred Scripture is illumined through his experience of prayer and lives again in its fullest breadth: the proclamation of the mystery of God and the response of man transformed. Yet, through the expression: “Lord of heaven and earth”, we can also recognize that in Jesus, the Revealer of the Father, the possibility for man to reach God is reopened.

Thursday

## DEEPLY RESTING IN JESUS

A Reflection by Thomas Keating, OCSO

*“Sing for joy, O heavens, and exult, O earth; break for into song, O mountains! The Lord has comforted his people and will have compassion on his suffering ones.”* (Is 49: 13) ‘Rest’ is the name for a wide variety of psychological and spiritual states—take peace, interior silence, contentment, a sense of coming home, of well-being and most of all, of God’s presence. Suppose this rest goes so deep that at some point during your prayer there are few or no thoughts passing through your head. One has a strong sense of the presence of God. The experience automatically causes a rest that goes deeper even than sleep.

The feeling of deep rest, especially when it involves a profound sense of the divine presence, leads one to find in God the truth and love that was not had as a child or that an important other didn’t give one. Deep rest is not only the result of freedom from attachments or aversions or feelings of not being accepted and loved. The Divine Mystery that we sense within us, and that Christian doctrine calls the Divine Indwelling, begins to awaken in us.

Rest grows deeper as our trust in God deepens and as emotional doubts about our self-worth - impressed upon us in childhood by various rejections or by excessive competition with others - begins to relax. Because this rest is so profound, we rest as we never have before.

Into this situation, Jesus comes. He says “Turn to me!” That involves changing the direction in which you are looking for happiness. Human happiness is found in the growth of unconditional love. The task of spiritual direction, for example, is to help one to become aware of the obstacles to unconditional divine love and to the free circulation of that love within us. This requires the cultivation of a non-possessive attitude toward ourselves and others. Gradually we learn that God is the true security, that God truly loves us, and that with this love we can make it—no matter what. Even if no one seems to care, God cares.

Jesus calls us to rest in this love. Without it we are dead. Jesus calls us back to life, and the life to which he calls us is unconditional love.

*Friday*

## **I DESIRE MERCY, NOT SACRIFICE**

**From the Angelus Message of Pope Benedict, 8 June 2008**

At the center of the liturgy of the Word, there is a saying of the Prophet Hosea to which Jesus refers in the Gospel: "I desire steadfast love and not sacrifice, the knowledge of God, rather than burnt offerings" (Hos 6: 6). It is a keyword, one of those that bring us into the heart of Sacred Scripture. Here, the Evangelist Matthew, ever attentive to the link between the Old and New Testaments, puts Hosea's prophecy on Jesus' lips: "Go and learn what this means, 'I desire mercy, and not sacrifice'".

These words of the Prophet are so important that the Lord cited them again in another context, about the observance of the Sabbath (cf. Mt 12: 1-8). In this case he assumed responsibility for the interpretation of the precept, showing himself to be "Lord" of even the legal institutions. Addressing the Pharisees he added: "If you had known what this means, 'I desire mercy, and not sacrifice', you would not have condemned the guiltless" (Mt 12: 7). Thus in Hosea's oracle Jesus, the Word made man, fully "found himself", as it were; he wholeheartedly made these words his own and put them into practice with his behavior, even at the cost of upsetting his People's leaders. God's words have come down to us, through the Gospels, as a synthesis of the entire Christian message: true religion consists in love of God and neighbor. This is what gives value to worship and to the practice of the precepts.

Addressing the Virgin Mary, let us now ask for her intercession in order to live in the joy of the Christian experience always. Mother of Mercy, Our Lady, awaken within us sentiments of filial abandonment to God who is infinite mercy; help us to make our own the prayer that St Augustine expresses in a well-known passage of his *Confessions*: "Lord, have pity on me.... I hide not my wounds; you are the physician, I the sick; you merciful, I miserable.... and all my hope is nowhere but in your exceeding great mercy" (X, 28, 39; 29, 40).

*Saturday*

## **A MEDITATION: SURRENDER IS EVERYTHING**

**By Jean-Pierre de Caussade, S.J.**

Surrender of the heart to God includes every possible way of obedience to God. It means giving up one's very being to God's good pleasure. Since this surrender is effected by unalloyed love, it includes in its embrace every kind of operation his good pleasure may bring to pass for us. Thus at every moment, we practice a surrender that has no limits, a surrender that includes all possible methods and degrees of service to God. It is not our business to decide what the ultimate purpose of such submission may be, but our sole duty is to submit ourselves to all that God sends us and to stand ready to do his will at all times.

What God requires of the soul is the essence of self-surrender. The free gifts he asks from us are self-denial, obedience, and love. The rest is his business. It does not matter whether the soul is carefully fulfilling the duties of one's state in life, or quietly following the leadings it is given, or submitting peacefully to the dealings of grace either for the body or for the soul. In all this, the soul is exercising, within, the one overall act of self-surrender.

It is not a matter of single, isolated incidents or the duty of one moment. It is the act that always carries with it the full merit and good effect that a sincere will always have, although the outcome does not depend on a single act of surrender. What the soul desires to do is done as in the sight of God.

If it happens that God's will sets a limit to the exercise of some particular faculty of ours, he sets no limit on our wills. The good pleasure of God, God's being and essence, are the object of the will, and through the exercise of love, it is united to God without limit, manner or measure.

O heavenly purity! O blessed emptying! O unreserved submission! Through you, God is welcomed into the very center of the heart! It matters not what my abilities may be, then, provided that I possess you, Lord. Do what you will with this insignificant creature. Whether it be that I should work, or become inspired or be the recipient of your impressions, it is all the same. Everything is yours; everything is from you and for you. I no longer have anything to be concerned about, anything to do. I have no hand in the arrangement of one single moment of my life; everything belongs to you. I do not need to add or subtract anything, nor to seek after or mull over anything. It is for you, Lord, to regulate everything: direction, humiliations, sanctification, perfection and salvation—all are your business, Lord. Mine is to be satisfied with your work and not to demand the choice of action or condition, but to leave everything to your good pleasure.