

[Spirituality](#)

[Pencil Preaching](#)



by Pat Marrin

[View Author Profile](#)

patrickjmarrin@gmail.com.

[**Join the Conversation**](#)

Send your thoughts to *Letters to the Editor*. [Learn more](#)

October 2, 2019

[Share on Facebook](#)[Share on Twitter](#)[Email to a friend](#)[Print](#)



Jesus sent them ahead in pairs to every town and place he intended to visit” (Luke 10:1).

The Word of God is always good news. Even when the themes are challenging or cautionary, the voice behind them is calling us to greater life.

When Ezra read the Book of Law to the assembled people, they wept to realize that their own failure to keep the Covenant had led to the defeat of Israel and the long exile and captivity in Babylon. Now restored to their homeland, the people understood their chastisement and were determined to live differently. Ezra urged them to celebrate God’s mercy in giving them another chance.

Jesus sent his disciples ahead of him to announce the Good News, which entered the homes and hearts of those who received them, healing illnesses and restoring peace to families. It must have been a daunting assignment for the disciples to go out without resources or protection to do these “cold-calls” in places that did not always accept them.

So Jesus sent them two by two, establishing a pattern that was not just reassuring for them, but also gave them the experience of forming friendships and little communities of purpose before extending the network of relationships that became

the church.

St. Paul was never without companions on his missionary journeys, going with Barnabas, then Timothy and, some say, Luke, the author of today's Gospel. In rejoicing in the faith communities he formed, Paul always acknowledged the men and women who were his partners in spreading the faith.

Jesus deliberately made his disciples dependent on the hospitality of the people they were encountering. They came without food or money, not even shoes, defenseless like "lambs among wolves" to demonstrate the power of weakness at the heart of the Gospel, to offer love to every open heart. Humility would win converts that credentials and skill would not attract.

We are called to this quiet approach, sincerity and spirit of service in conveying the Good News to others, especially those who resist us or are suspicious of our motives. Winning hearts has never been easy, but it is the way of the Gospel. Listening opens more doors than preaching. Actions speak volumes. On this eve of the feast of St. Francis of Assisi, we recall his advice to his little brothers. "Preach the Gospel, and use words if necessary."

Advertisement