Spirituality
Pencil Preaching





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“The harvest is abundant, but the laborers are few” (Luke 10:2).

St. Luke, evangelist

2 Tim 4:10-17b; Luke 10:1-9

St. Luke’s Gospel was written to share the story of Jesus Christ with the Gentile world. He was himself a Gentile, a key companion to St. Paul and his principal biographer in the Acts of the Apostles, Volume Two of his Gospel. Luke used material also found in Mark and Matthew, but added other sources and shaped his account theologically to help his non-Jewish audience understand the universal impact of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. He was a skilled writer and editor in Greek, and his Gospel gave us his beautiful Infancy Narratives and some of the most compelling of the parables of Jesus, including the Prodigal Son, the Good Samaritan and Lazarus and Dives.

Today’s Gospel about the missionary work of Jesus’ disciples reminds us that Jesus depended on many others to spread the Good News. The four evangelists and St. Paul took up this commission by sharing the stories and sayings of Jesus passed on by eyewitnesses and the first generation of preachers whose proclamations launched the primitive church.

We celebrate the feast of St. Luke to remind us that we are the latest generation of evangelists. Without our lived experience of the presence of Jesus, even the Scriptures become texts in sacred books to be read or historical accounts to be studied. The Word comes alive when it is heard and activated in us as believers and disciples. We experience the risen Jesus in prayer, in our communities and in the living out of his teachings, especially his call to serve one another, the hungry, thirsty, ill-clothed, sick, imprisoned, rejected and persecuted of our world today. This is where we meet Jesus.

In Luke’s account, Jesus assures his evangelists that they need not depend on their own power or resources. He sends out the seventy-two disciples without money, provisions, protection or even shoes. They go like lambs among wolves. They carry only their own faith and the news that the “reign of God is at hand.” Where people are receptive, they provide for the disciples, welcoming them and the blessings they bring. The first evangelists returned to Jesus filled with wonder that everything he had promised was true. Faith met faith, and the joy of the Gospel flowed freely.

Near the end of his Gospel, Luke’s exquisite story of the disciples on the road to Emmaus summarizes the faith of the church for all time by showing Jesus walking as a stranger with two discouraged disciples after his death. He confronts their faltering faith, then explains from the beginning the scriptural promises that the Christ would suffer to fulfill the Law and the Prophets. When he reveals himself in the breaking of the bread, they rush back to Jerusalem to tell the others of their encounter.

We are those disciples on the road. The Scriptures and the Eucharist in community are the heart of our church and the source of our faith in the living Christ, stranger no more, but the one who sends to tell the world that the reign of God is at hand.

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