

11th Sunday in Ordinary Time (A)
(Exodus 19:2-6 / Mt 9:36-10,8)
14.06.2026
Compassion

Dear brothers and sisters,

Jesus came into the world to reveal the compassion of our heavenly Father for all his children whom he created out of love. Jesus reveals His Father's compassion by being compassionate in his turn towards his people. Jesus appointed twelve apostles to assist Him in his ministry of compassion. By our baptism, we are called to be compassionate for all our brothers and sisters in humanity, just as Jesus is compassionate towards us.

The word 'compassion' is made of two Latin words: 'com-passio' which means 'to suffer with', to share the feelings of others, to rejoice with those who rejoice, and to suffer with those who suffer. Jesus could not fail to pay attention to the needs of the people he encountered during his journeys. To take three examples from the previous chapter of Matthew's gospel passage we have just heard, Jesus could not overlook the paralysed man in Capernaum, or the two blind men of Jericho, or the woman who had suffered from a haemorrhage for twelve years. He could not pass them by without doing something to relieve their suffering.

Jesus often saw people who were hungry and afflicted by all kinds of diseases and sicknesses, and the same thing always happened: He felt compassion for them. But there was something that hurt him in a particular way: Matthew reminds us that "when Jesus saw the crowds, he felt sorry for them, because they were harassed and dejected, like sheep without a shepherd". Neither the representatives of Rome, nor the religious leaders of Jerusalem cared for the people of the villages Jesus visited. Jesus wanted to serve his people as their shepherd.

Jesus chose twelve disciples to assist him in his ministry. He shared with them his authority and power: "He gave them authority over unclean spirits with power to cast them out and to cure all kinds of diseases and sickness". The authority that Jesus gave his apostles was not a sacred power to be used arbitrarily according to their own wishes. It was not a power to govern people and nations in the manner of the Romans. Rather, it was a power whose purpose was to do good, to drive out unclean spirits, and to heal every kind of disease and sickness.

All authority exercised within the Church derives from and is founded upon the compassion of Jesus for his people. Its purpose is to heal, to alleviate suffering, and to do good. It is a gift from Jesus. Those who exercise such authority must do so freely, because the Church is Jesus' gift to the nations.

Jesus gives his disciples four orders which remain relevant for us today: "Cure the sick; raise the dead; cleanse the lepers; cast out devils". We could reflect on each one of these commandments separately, but we can also look at them together, and apply them to the culture in which we live at present.

Nowadays, many of us are more or less dependent on so-called means of communication such as mobile phones or laptops. Yet these often fail to create true communion and can instead lead to loneliness, isolation and depression. These are among the great sicknesses of our time. In this context, Jesus asks us to be present to others, to look at them, to give them our time, to listen to and to speak to each other, and to share our talents with those who need them. Is this not an important way of showing compassion towards our neighbours in today's society?

The scene of the Last Judgement in Matthew 25 reminds us that we shall be judged on our love for our brothers and sisters in humanity. Are we attentive to their basic needs? Do we console those who mourn? Do we visit the sick in hospitals, care homes or in their own homes? Do we visit those in prison? Do we feed the hungry and give a drink to the thirsty? Do we welcome the stranger, the migrants? Do we clothe the poor? Do we help those who struggle make ends meet? Do we show compassion to all our brothers and sisters in need, especially those who live close to us? The Lord Jesus needs us to reveal his compassion to the world.

Another sickness of our time is that we become so absorbed in what we do that we neglect why we do it and for whom we do it. We give priority to money, profit and career advancement while neglecting human values. What we do is important and we must strive to do it well. But even more important is who we are. Each one of us is a beloved child of God and consequently we are brothers and sisters to one another. This identity is more important than anything we can achieve in life. Who we are is more important than what we do. We have to show compassion to one another by reminding each other that our dignity does not depend on our achievements.

Jesus invites his apostles to proclaim that "the Kingdom of heaven is close at hand". What is the Kingdom of heaven? Where is it? The Kingdom of heaven is present wherever the compassion of God is received and shared with others. Wherever we show compassion to one another, there the Kingdom of heaven is already at work. It is up to us to make it visible. God counts on us to do so. Our contemporaries are waiting for it. Let us not disappoint them.