

Feast of Saint Luke

October 18, 2006

II Tm 4:10-17b

Ps 145:10-11, 12-13, 17-18

Lk 10:1-9

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On a Missionary Journey with St. Luke

When I was in 8th grade (I was 13 years-old then), in junior high school in San Diego, California (and I went to a public school), I helped to sell candy bars — Hershey’s Symphony, large milk-chocolate candy bars about this big for \$2 a piece — as a fundraiser for our student government — the Associated Student Body (ASB). I had a small box of 50 candy bars, which I sold door-to-door. It took me about three days in the afternoons after school to sell the whole box door-to-door, after ringing many doorbells in the homes and nearby condos and apartments near my uncle’s house. During my rounds of walking and selling, I became excited when I was down to three more candy bars that I had to sell. And of course, the triumph and joy came when I sold the entire box of 50 chocolate bars. That was my mission then, to sell chocolate candy for a good cause.

Today we have different missions. Here in our community, some of us are formators, one of us is a teacher at the Catholic University of America and another brother pays our bills and makes sure we have food on the table. Most of us have the mission of studying theology and applying this to our ministries. Praise God that we have generously responded to the Jesus’ call — “*The harvest is abundant but the laborers are few; so beg the harvest master to send out laborers for his harvest,*” as it is written in today’s Gospel according to St. Luke.

The 72 others whom Jesus sent were given specific instructions: “*carry no money bag, no sack, no sandals; say ‘Peace to this household’ into whatever house you enter; eat and drink*

whatever is offered and cure the sick,” and so forth. Their mission was to spread the good news of salvation through Jesus.

One laborer who responded to Jesus' call and who also had a mission was Luke, who as an evangelist wrote a very detailed gospel as well as the Acts of the Apostles. Luke was a Syrian from Antioch who, although was not a part of that first generation of Christian disciples, was dependent upon the traditions he received from those who were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word. His two-volume work marks him as someone who was highly educated in both in the Old Testament traditions according to the Greek versions and in the Hellenistic Greek writings. St. Luke was also a missionary who may have accompanied St. Paul on parts of his second and third missionary journeys.

Throughout his Gospel, Luke calls upon the Christian disciple to identify with the master Jesus, who is caring and tender toward the poor and the lowly, the outcast, the sinner, and the afflicted, toward those who recognize their dependence on God, but who is severe toward the proud and self-righteous, and particularly toward those who place their material wealth before the service of God and his people. No gospel writer is more concerned than Luke with the mercy and compassion of Jesus. No gospel writer is more concerned with the role of the Spirit in the life of Jesus and the Christian disciple, with the importance of prayer, or with Jesus' concern for women.

Through Luke's Gospel, we are thus called to follow Christ — by being merciful and compassionate; through prayer; by caring for the poor, the outcast and the afflicted; by allowing the Holy Spirit to dwell in our hearts and minds and therefore bending our wills to the will of God. We are also called to recognize our dependence on God, to know that we will be lost, confused and in dire straits without God's love, divine mercy and providence. By doing these things, we make God's

kingdom a visible reality in our world, a kingdom that is happening right here, right now.

As we approach this Eucharistic table of sacrifice and plenty, we ask for the prayers of St. Luke the Evangelist that the gospel messages may always sink into our minds and hearts, that as followers of Christ Jesus we may live what the gospels teach us, and proceed with our missionary journeys, until we reach that eternal glory with God.