

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Matthew:

The eleven disciples went to Galilee,
to the mountain to which Jesus had ordered them.
When they saw him, they worshiped, but they doubted.
Then Jesus approached and said to them,
“All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me.
Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations,
baptizing them in the name of the Father,
and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit,
teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.
And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age.”

Going Forth Christians

Many years ago, I attended a national evangelization conference in Portland Oregon. The Key note speaker stood at the podium she slowly, clearly spoke Jesus command, “Go, and make disciples of all nations” after a long pause, the speaker asked, “What part of GO did you not understand.” She made her point, Jesus never intended us to be sitting around but to go and spread His message.

I have a cousin, Father Joe Bisson, a Divine Word Missionary Priest, he worked over fifty three years in the most primitive mountainous area of Papua New Guinea. At a very young he heard Jesus’ words, to Go, and he went half way around the world to tell people about the love of God found in Jesus Christ.

Like my cousin, many people heard the message to go, they became Missionaries, or Priests or religious brothers or sisters. However, the command “to GO” is not just meant for a few but all followers of Jesus Christ.

At our Baptism, God called each of us by name and we were anointed with sacred chrism. As we were anointed, the Priest or Deacon spoke these words over us, "Just as Jesus was anointed Priest, Prophet and King, so you too share in His ministry." Each of us shares in the ministry of Christ Himself. It was at our Baptism that we were given the privilege and honor to GO and spread Christ's love.

At the end of Mass, the Priests has four options for dismissal. Number one: Go forth, the Mass is ended, or Go and announce the Gospel of the Lord. The third option is Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life. Finally, he can dismiss the people by saying, “Go in peace.” In every option for dismissal, the word Go is used. When the Priest says, Go, he is not saying it now time to leave, but is reminding everyone that as Christians we are to go and spread Christ's message.

In Christianity, we might find two types, those who are standing-still and those who are going-forth.

After Jesus ascends into Heaven, the disciples were standing still looking up; the angels asked them, “**Why are you standing still looking up?**” The angels were telling the disciples don't look up but look out. Don't look up, look out into the world for this is where the Lord is calling us to go. When we are sent out, He promises to help us, Jesus said, “I will send you the Holy Spirit, and you will be

my witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and the ends of the earth.” Jesus’ never intended us to keep the message to ourselves and that is why He says, “**Just as the Father has sent me, so I send you.**” The word Apostle means, “one who is sent.” When Jesus said, “So I send you” He was referring to all of us.

A standing-still Christian waits for someone else to go but a sending-forth Christian looks for ways to go and making a difference. Some believers feel comfortable standing-still but Jesus never meant us keep His message just to ourselves. To be Christians means to be sent, to go and make a difference.

Many years ago, my parents told me a story about one of my nephews. My nephew Keegan was a freshman in High School and a member of the wrestling team. My parents attended one of his meets, along with other parents, grandparents, and members of the student body. Just before the matches got under way, the Principal invited everyone to stand for the National Anthem. Everyone waited for the Anthem to begin but after a long delay they realized that the recording was not working.

The principal then asked if anyone would be willing to sing the National Anthem, however no one came forward. My nephew walked to the microphone. My parents and Keegan parents wondered what he was doing since he does not sing in the choir, has never taken voice lessons, nor has he sang in public. When Keegan begins to sing

the National Anthem, it prompted others to join in. Keegan didn't do a perfect job but everyone enthusiastically applauded his effort. You see, Keegan did not have any special talent or knowledge of singing but his willingness to take a chance made all the difference.

Like Keegan, being a going forth Christian doesn't mean we need any special knowledge of the Bible or expert in Church teaching. Going forth Christians means we can spread the message of Christ's by what we do and what we say. Saint Mother Theresa puts it this way, "do small things with great love, be the living expression of God's kindness in the world, kindness in your face, kindness in your smile, kindness in your expression and kindness in your warm greeting." No matter who you are you can be a going forth Christian.

Saint Oscar Romero wrote:

This what we are about. We plant the seeds that one day will grow. We cannot do everything but we can do something. It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning, a step along the way. We are workers, not expert builders. We are prophets of a future not our own. Amen.

Let us pray: Please pray these words after me: Lord Jesus, you call me to GO. Fill me with your Holy Spirit, give me courage to go and make a difference. May the Gospel I write with the words I say and the things I do truly be Good News. Amen and Amen."

Go in peace, glorifying the Lord with your life.

May Almighty God bless you, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

May God bless you and keep you, may God's face shine upon you and be gracious to you.

Stay safe and may Mother Mary hold you in her arms.