

# After disappointment, shake dust off, move on

written by Bishop Anthony B. Taylor |

In today's Gospel, Jesus sends 72 disciples on a hike. They will be visiting a lot of towns and will be camping along the way.

Unlike us hikers today who plan carefully in order not to forget something we need, Jesus tells them to leave behind their money, their backpack and their sandals. God will provide everything they need. Unlike us who enjoy the camaraderie of other hikers, Jesus says "greet no one along the way." Their hike is not for recreation; it's to proclaim a message, a message that will not always be well received.

This is the first time in the Gospels that Jesus sends his disciples out to proclaim the Good News that "the kingdom of God is at hand." The first thing they were to say upon entering someone's home was "Peace to this household." And yet they were often treated with hostility. Why was this? And for that matter, why does the Church continue to face hostility today?

- One reason is that Jesus calls us and our nation to live according to a higher law, which is something we should remember as we celebrate our July 4 holiday. The Gospel of Jesus Christ is a Gospel of Life rooted in the truths of divine revelation and natural law, and is the opposite of the amoral, live-and-let-live ethos of many in today's world. Rather than ask, "What does God want me to do with my life, most people's actions show that they expect to find security in the things of this world and happiness in living however they want — yet this willfulness only leaves them feeling even more insecure than before, because the conscience that God planted in us will not allow us to find true peace so long as we persist in seeking our own will rather than God's will. This is why today's pagans seek validation from us by imposing on us laws that permit grave evils, like abortion in places where it will remain legal even after the recent Supreme Court decision overturning *Roe v. Wade*.

Or policies that are rooted in fear and promote fear, like denying people their God-given right to immigrate when desperate circumstances require, and like the death penalty, which is totally unnecessary. The Kingdom of God that Jesus proclaims is countercultural and all of us have an obligation to proclaim God's truth whether it is popular or not. In today's Gospel we learn that sometimes faithfulness to Jesus will require us to face the hostility of those who would rather live a lie than accept the truth.

- Another reason people reject us is our message that God is the master of our destiny and our possessions — not us: "He has the whole world in his hands." Meaning that while we can and should plan for the future, none of us has any real control over that future; it's all ultimately in his hands.

And one day we will have to give an accounting for what we have done with the many gifts God has given us. Are we doing with our lives what God asks of us? In today's Gospel Jesus sends his disciples out with no money bag, no sack and no sandals to teach us that we can trust God to provide us a means to meet our needs, and by extension, that we are to be the means by

which the needs of others are met.

- And finally, we learn what we should do when we face disappointment and rejection in the service of the Lord. We should simply shake the dust off our feet and move on. Dust is a powerful thing. It seems small but can accumulate. Those ancient cities that archeologists excavate are covered with nothing but dust that has accumulated over time. Jesus says that adversity can have that same effect on us. So, we should simply shake the dust off our feet, shake off the disappointment and rejection and move on.

You and I are on a journey through life, hikers whom Jesus sends forth as his emissaries in a very troubled world. Like any hiking trail, there is a definite path to follow. Jesus shows us the way. It is countercultural. It is all in God's hands. And though there will sometimes be disappointment and rejection, those are just challenges that are part of the journey. All Jesus asks is that we be faithful and trust that everything will work out in the end.

*Bishop Anthony B. Taylor delivered this homily July 3.*