

**15<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME • B**  
**CHRIST THE KING • JULY 11-12, 2009**

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If you have ever moved, or even taken a vacation, the words of Jesus are haunting: “Take nothing for the journey but a walking stick, no food, no sack, no money in your belt.” You can, however, take your sandals. I don’t know about you, but when I travel, I often over pack.

Jesus instructions tempt me to pray, “Lord Jesus, be with me always — but if it’s all the same with you, please don’t be in charge of my vacation or the hike I take.” Was Jesus just trying to make things difficult? I don’t think so. Jesus wasn’t saying, “Be unprepared and unequipped.” He was making a point about the most important preparation and equipment we can take with us on any venture — faith that God will see us through because God has called us and because God sends us.

I believe the readings are inviting us today to realize what it means to be baptized, to be called and to be sent. So the concept of being “called” and “sent” is something we might want to think about. What does it mean that you and I are called by name, and sent forth to do God’s work individually and collectively?

**Called by Name**

God has called us, each one of us. At the baptism of Jesus, a voice was heard that said, “This is my beloved, in whom I am well pleased.” That same voice spoke at our baptism. “You are my beloved, in whom I am well pleased.” God has known us from before we were born and is well pleased. We are created in God’s image.

This image of God calling people is very interesting, because often those who are called are the unexpected ones, the unprepared ones, the ones who are least likely to be given a position, and the people who are called are asked to confound the wise and the well-established. God doesn’t chose teams like teams where chosen in high school.

Being called by God, means that we are loved by God, unconditionally. That God will see us through and be with us always, even when we feel unequipped and unprepared. God will ensure that we have what we need, when we need it.

## Sent Forth

So having been called, we are also sent forth to do God work. Think of the very name we give this liturgy — the Mass. The word “Mass” comes from the Latin word *missa*, one of the last words of the rite: *Ite, missa est*. We hear this translated most often as “Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.” More literally, it is “Go, you are sent.”

“Mass” is an appropriate name for this act of worship,  
because we come in here so that God  
may send us back out there.  
Everything that we do in here,  
we do not only for its own sake  
but also for the sake of the world.

We gather together here as the church,  
not to be some mutual admiration society  
but rather to practice being that all-inclusive community  
that the world is called to be.

We gather together here to be the church *for* the world,  
to be salt for the earth, light for the world,  
a city set atop the hill for all to see and enter.

We listen together to God’s word —  
not only to be nourished individually  
but also to be commissioned corporately,  
to be given our task, our assignment,  
our homework,  
our role in transforming this world  
into the reign of God.

We take bread and wine and offer thanks and praise and share  
the body and the blood not just for our own sanctification  
but for the salvation of the whole world,  
so “that from east to west a perfect offering  
may be made to the glory” of God’s name.

And we share the body and blood so that we —  
not only as individuals but more so as a church, a community  
— can be bread for the hungry and wine for those who thirst.

We did not come here as a random group of strangers.

We were called here by God in virtue of  
the water bath and the anointing.

We do not leave here a random group of strangers.

We are sent out in the power of the Holy Spirit  
to be the body of Christ at work in the world.

We are not sent out alone (the “you” is not a bunch of me’s, it’s us.)

We are not sent out empty handed.

We go out knowing more clearly who we are.

We go out with a fire burning in our souls,  
with the word on our lips, with nourishment in our bellies.

We go out eager to do the work of the one who sends us,  
fortified to fight evil rather than to flee from it,  
ready to pass through pain rather than ignore it,  
resolved to defeat death rather than deny it.

By name we have been called and by name we are sent!