

Homily of Fr. Deepak Toppo SJ

3 July 2002 – Community s. Michele - Rome

Today we celebrate the 14<sup>th</sup> Sunday of the ordinary time. It is a special Sunday for us because two of our sisters will be receiving crucifix as a mark of their readiness to out for God's mission, to live a life of love as Jesus did no matter what comes on their way.

The readings of the day could be understood from the perspective of Mission. In the Gospel, Jesus is appointing 70 and sending them for the mission. Who are these people appointed by Jesus? They are His disciples; they are His followers. They are people who are into a loving and living relationship with Him. Do these people have any special qualification to be appointed by Him? Not really! The one and the only quality that makes them qualify the appointment is that: they love Jesus and they are not afraid to tell the world that they are the lovers of Jesus. What matters to them in life is Jesus and Jesus alone. They want to be with Him, labour with Him and suffer with Him.

St. Ignatius in his Spiritual Exercises speaks of three types of persons which could also be seen as three different levels of love. The first level where one says I will obey you. Here the rules and regulations become very important. If you love God, you will keep the ten commandments. If you love the Church you will abide by the six precepts of the Church and if you love your congregation, you will live according to the constitutions of your congregation. But this is a superficial level of love.

The second level of love where one says: your wish is my wish, your likes/dislikes are my likes/dislikes. This is deeper than the first level of love.

The third level which is the deepest level of love where one says your values are my values. If you love Jesus, you will personalize the values of Jesus. According to St. Ignatius, the values of the world are riches, honour, and pride whereas the values of Jesus are just the opposite of these. They are poverty, humility, and Cross. By the very fact, that these two sisters of ours are embracing Cross speaks of their love for Jesus being at level three.

My dear sisters! We all are invited to love Jesus from the highest level of love that is from the third level of love. We need to check today whether we live our lives according to the values of Jesus.

Jesus is sending the disciples; but he is not simply sending them for the sake of sending. He is sending them equipped with His message and power. He has imprinted His message in their hearts and in their lives. They have the lived experience of being loved by Jesus. He is sending them with His power that is why the Gospel says "heal the sick."

Dear sisters (Mektilde and Beatrix), in and through your missionary formation here in Rome, Jesus has equipped you with His message and His power and now you are ready to be sent out for Him.

Through this Eucharistic celebration my sisters, Jesus is in fact imprinting His message in our hearts, He is empowering us by His own power. Let us therefore, participate in it sapientially meaning we participate in it with love and with the readiness to be affected by it.

The first and the second reading speak of peace. What is this peace? Jesus is the personification of peace. When you experience Jesus being with you here and now, you experience peace. Sharing the experience of Jesus being with you is your mission, is the mission of Sr. Mektilde and Sr. Beatrix, and in fact is the mission of all of us. May we succeed in doing and fulfilling this mission.

There was an orphanage run by Canossian sisters. Two sisters were working there. A girl of age 8 was brought to the orphanage. The girl seemed to be not OK. was very silent and depressed. The Sister in-charge told the other sister- pay an extra attention to this girl for she really needed help.

It was Sunday morning; all the children were standing in a queue to get their breakfast items. This little girl was the last in the queue. The junior sister observed that this girl leaving the queue and moving towards the mango orchard belonging to the sisters. The sister quietly followed her. The girl went to a little mango tree, climbed up, took a small piece of paper and tied it on a small branch of the tree. Then she climbed down and got back to the other children. Sister wanted to know what was tied there so she went to the tree and untied the paper. In the paper, it was written: WHOEVER SEES THIS I WANT YOU TO KNOW THAT I LOVE YOU VERY MUCH..... Maria.

My dear sisters, this girl was so small and yet she was so full of love and was dying to share this love to others.

My dear sisters..... whenever we see the crucifix, the tree of the Cross, this is the message that is being communicated to each one of us by God the Father - Whoever sees this I want you to know that I love you very much. May we succeed in listening and responding to this message of God our Father.