

Homily: Sept. 6, 2023

By Fr. Virgil Petermeier, osc

We gather this morning to celebrate Jesus' proclamation of Good News. We too must be Good-News people in a world challenged with illusory fake news. We need Good News as life's anchor and truth. God is patient and forgiving, so we sing, "Señor, ten piedad!"

In this Gospel I find Jesus' attitude and stance as helpful to me, and hopefully for all of you, too. Jesus heals Peter's mother-in-law and many other sick people from the city of Capernaum. Earlier he invited people to love with all they are. By healing and many other ministries, Jesus gave a consistent example of what he had called others to be and do. He served tirelessly. But, at dawn Jesus "escaped" to a quiet place for prayer.

Then a key moment arose when a local crowd finally discover Jesus and beg him to resume healing the many sick already waiting early that morning back in town. A surprise turn-- Jesus answers, "To the other towns also I must proclaim the good news of the Kingdom of God, because for this purpose I have been sent." So he left for other towns.

Jesus was free of our tendency to want as many "likes" as possible by pleasing the crowd and trying to finish all the serving people desired. Imagine how disappointed many people were. But, Jesus considered planting the seed by proclaiming the good news of the Kingdom of God as his primary ministry.

I find this scene so helpful. Why? Because Jesus is telling you and me that the good news is even more important than attending to every sickness. Indirectly, Jesus was revealing his good news as the basic healer of society.

I understand Jesus' "Good News" to mean revealing the truth about forgiveness as the key way for healing life's tensions, eradicating revenge, peacemaking, and dedicating oneself to what is BEST for the other, for creation, and for oneself. Jesus knew that if people would live the Good News, there would rarely be sickness, which often results from tension, stress, loneliness, and other consequences of not loving and forgiving. Yes, there will be far less sickness whenever people live the good news of being sisters and brothers of one another. And, if one becomes sick, true brothers and sisters will serve one another's health needs.

No wonder Jesus prioritized proclamation of the good news.

So we must ask, how can we give greater prioritization to proclaiming the good news? Rightly does the church today focus on finding better and better ways to evangelize.

1—By initially furthering our own understanding of the essential good news of Jesus, so that we are deeply convinced of and understand the greatness of the Good News. Do we really understand how amazing Jesus' verbal word and action word are? The news that **loving LOVE as our God is the essence of life.**

Seeing the other person as another presence of our own self, builds respect, unity, and compassion so powerful that the world will become the full kingdom of God—which we call heaven.

2--Bible reflection will renew and remind us repeatedly about how essential and crucial simple deeds of love are.

3—Regular/daily prayer will be those critical moments of connecting with the Spirit of Love alive in and around us.

4—Finally, if we do the above, we too will do like Jesus --- **trim out the non-essentials** and **prioritize** the proclamation of the Good News by our words and actions. Along with Jesus, we will say, **“For this purpose I have been sent.”**