

## Reflection for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Easter

*“Thus, it is written that the Christ would suffer and rise from the dead on the third day and that repentance, for the forgiveness of sins, would be preached in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things.” Luke 24: 46-48*

We as a people of faith have just taken a 40-day journey into the desert, then we celebrated the Paschal Triduum, followed by Divine Mercy Sunday. Now on this 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Easter the last two sentences of our Gospel reading, taken from the Gospel of Luke, we hear of all that has taken place regarding Jesus Christ was fore told. Our Gospel reading this Sunday is reminding us that God our Father has been transparent with us, His desire is for us to have a covenant with Him and for us to be His people and Him to be our God, has been shared with humanity from the beginning of time. From one generation to the next we as a people have come up short in many ways in responding to God’s invitation to be His people.

Our Gospel reading this Sunday in the last two sentences of the reading quotes Jesus Christ reminding His disciples of their “Great Commission.” Most Biblical Scholars quote the Gospel of Matthew 28:16-20 as providing the “Great Commission” where Jesus on a mountain in Galilee calls His followers to make disciples of all nations baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and then He ascends to His Father and our Father, the Ascension of the Lord. Many Biblical Scholars tend to see Luke 10:1-23 also as the “Great Commission,” this is when Jesus sends out the 72 to proclaim the good news, and upon their return they see Satan fall from the sky. Biblical Scholars also state that Mark 16:14-18 and John 14:23 also contain the “Great Commission.” It is important to note that the “Great Commission” takes place at different times in each one of the four Gospels. In Luke the “Great Commission” happens at the earliest point in the ministry of Jesus so it does make sense that Luke would mention this calling later in his Gospel. Mark and Matthew both mention the invitation of Jesus to share the “Good News” with all the world after the resurrection of Jesus, John mentions it at the “Last Supper.” Luke’s second mention of the invitation like Mark and Matthew also takes place after the Resurrection of Jesus. Luke is the only Gospel that mentions the sending forth the 72 disciples.

From the moment that Jesus called His disciples and invited them to follow Him, Christ expected His followers to be a part of His ministry, be it calling Peter, Andrew, James and John to be “Fishers of Men” or the sending forth of the “72.” It is clear that Jesus expects us as His followers to do more than just believe that He is the Son of God. In the last two verses of our Gospel Reading this Sunday we are reminded that Christ’s Death and Resurrection has a purpose and a message, that from this event is to come repentance and the forgiveness of sins.

Looking back on the history of the world since the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead we can see how the Church, the followers of Christ have been embracing the “Great Commission” and from one generation to the next making disciples, baptizing, and providing the opportunity for the forgiveness of sins. We can also see that since the resurrection of Jesus Christ the Church has been active in the world striving to make the world a better place. Be it Schools, Universities, Orphanages, Soup Kitchens, and more the Church throughout the ages has been making a difference in peoples lives and in society as a whole.

We as followers of Christ and as members of His Church should feel proud of all that the Church has done to share the Gospel message and to help people, but we should also ask ourselves as individuals and as a Church what are we doing today to share the Gospel message and to help people? We must be willing to follow the example of the disciples in the “Great Commission” in our daily lives.