

**Friday, 18 October 2019**  
**Lk 10:1-9 Sending of Disciples**  
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If we really value our faith we will find ways to share it with others. "We write these things so that our joy may be complete".-With these words St. John begins his letter (1 Jn 1:4). The word "evangelization" makes our mission work very strange to ordinary Christians. It is not our work. We support it through our financial contribution on mission Sunday. This is the usual attitude of average Christians. The word "Mission" is derived from the Latin "mitere" - to send. Every baptized person is expected to share what he values and cherishes, the reason for his faith in Christ. It is the sharing of the Good News which we have experienced. The first thing the two disciples of John the Baptist who stayed with Jesus did was to share with Simon Peter, the brother Andrew, one of the two what they had experienced: "We have found the Messiah" (Jn 1:42). It was the sharing of what they experienced. We have a number of examples in the Gospels in which those who were healed by Jesus go and tell others what they had experienced. This is mission. It is the sharing of the good news of our encounter with Jesus.

We seldom get opportunities for "direct evangelization." Then what are we to do! The words of Cardinal Newman come to my mind telling me what to do: "Let me thus praise You the way You love best, by shining on those around me. Let me preach You without preaching, not by words but by my example, by the catching force of the sympathetic influence of what I do, the evident fullness of the love my heart bears to You". Emeritus Pope Benedict once said, "True motivation for missionary work is not to increase the Church's size but to share the joy of knowing Christ."

I like to share an example which I cherish very much. There is an orphanage in Coimbatore with the name "Ashrayabhavan" run by Charity Sisters. There are 135 girls, all Hindus. The question of "conversion" is out of place. But it is a big family. All the inmates attend mass and take part in prayers. I remember the case of one girl who came to the house when she was four. She often expressed her desire for baptism, which the Sisters declined. By law one is free to take baptism after eighteen. She studied civil law. When she turned eighteen she received baptism. She wants to join their Congregation. I find two reasons for the conversion of this girl: one, the Christian atmosphere of the house, it is a big family and the other the example of the sisters. I know the Sister in charge is for long time there. She knows each of the girls. When the Sisters are transferred after three years no lasting relationship can be established. We can think of our orphanages and old age homes. Without any direct preaching the inmates will receive the good news through our relationship with them and through our example.

The instruction of the Vatican Council regarding our relationship with the members of other religions has great relevance in our country, especially in the prevailing atmosphere created by the Hindutva government. The Council asks the Christian believers to maintain positive relationship with the followers of other

religions. All of us mingle with them almost daily, but without showing any interest in their religion. The Church asks us to show positive interest in their religious life, to know the values they attach to their religious practices and festivals, "while witnessing" to our own faith. This is a prerequisite to create in them positive interest in our practices. In my numerous contacts with Hindus through the mission of Divyodaya, Coimbatore I have come to know that they don't know anything about our faith. Some said that we believed that outside the church there is no salvation. With such a 'holier than thou' attitude we cannot make any break through to create positive relationship. I know some charismatic preachers with fundamentalist attitude will curse me! They are unaware of the teaching of Church and insensitive to the prevailing condition in our country.

If our faith is dear to us, if it is the treasure for us we will find ways to share it with others. But if by faith we understand not our "meeting with Christ" but our attachment to some rituals and doctrines we will not have an urge to share it with others.

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