

**Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> Week Ordinary Time      February 1, 2018      St. Agnes Church**

Jesus Christ, Son of God, has come into this world.

Why? For two major reasons: to free the world from its slavery to corruption and sin; and that the world and its people might share in God's glory.

In Jesus Christ the glory of God has come to this earth.

The followers of Jesus share in in this glory. They are taught the ways of God. They are shown the path to salvation. They are enlightened by God's wisdom. Their eyes are opened to the truth and love of the Father.

In today's gospel Jesus adds another dimension to his coming into the world.

Jesus knows what needs to be done to further the cause of his Kingdom.

He commissions his followers, his disciples, to serve the Kingdom.

He sends them out, they go before him, to work on his behalf.

They are to take what they have learned, to take the gifts they have received, and bring them to others.

He extends the reach of his own work through them.

By the service of his followers his word can spread farther.

His glory can be brought to many more people.

Catholicism, Christianity, is a missionary religion.

As modern-day followers and disciples, we too are commissioned to bring the faith we are given, to bring the blessings we receive from God, to those who are in need of salvation.

There are many people in the world who live in darkness.

There are many people who are broken and in need of healing.

There are many people who are scattered from the flock.

There are many people who are oppressed and imprisoned by evil.

People are looking for freedom from their demons, awaiting healing from their sicknesses.

Today, as we celebrate the success of the disciples in the gospel,

as we rejoice in their ability to heal and to cast out demons,

we are reminded: the grace of God is poured out through the service of God's people.

It is our birthright, it is our heritage, it is our inheritance, it is our obligation,

to fulfill the mission entrusted to the Church by Jesus Christ.

We tend to forget this, but we have something those first missionaries didn't have: the Holy Spirit.

If we have been Confirmed we have the blessings and gifts of Wisdom, Understanding,

Right Judgment. We have been given Knowledge, Courage, Reverence, Wonder and Awe.

Why do these gifts lay dormant in our souls?

We may not be able to cast out demons, we may not be able to cure the sick, per se.

But we can heal the broken-hearted, bring some goodness to hearts wounded by jealousy, hatred, greed and pride.

We can raise up the lowly by caring about them and for them.

We can help others in their need, show them mercy. We can bring some joy to the sorrowful.

We can be a source of peace to those in distress, those who live in fear.

Through our words and actions we can build up what others tear down.

Even a word of prayer for someone is of great service to God's Kingdom.

What do we believe is a life pleasing to the Lord? It is a life dedicated to loving service.

When God sees us serving others it brings Him great delight.

Today's prayer: "O Lord, make us servants of Your peace. May the words of Your Son Jesus Christ motivate us to reach out in service to those in need of Your compassion. Help us to trust that as we step out in faith You are with us always. Amen!"