

RE-FOUNDING THE MISSION OF JESUS TODAY
FIFTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME – 11 JULY 2021



Painting by James Tissot | He Sent them out Two by Two (Il les envoya deux à deux), 1886-1896 | public domain

PRAYER

In this ongoing COVID-19 Pandemic,
at all Masses this weekend, in prayerful solidarity,
we light a candle and pray for the people
of the Great Sydney Region and Surrounding Districts.

Our prayer is on the parish website at: <https://bit.ly/PrayerforSydney08072021>

[pause and pray]

During Friday evening Adoration, and at the beginning of the five baptisms on Saturday,
we also prayed for the people of the Great Sydney Region and Surrounding Districts.

BISHOP VINCENT LONG POINTS TO THE WAY FORWARD AS CHURCH

Recently, on June 30th, Bishop Vincent Long gave a challenging address
at the Annual Dom Helder Camara Lecture, entitled '[**My hope for the Plenary Council.**](#)'

He reminded us that the initial Plenary phase of listening, before the COVID-19 Pandemic
'drew nearly 220,000 people across Australia and 17,500 individual and group submissions.'

*'These submissions were distilled into the six national theme papers
and then further distilled again into the working document and finally the agenda.
Momentum for the Plenary Council ebbed and flowed during this process,
which has been disrupted by the pandemic.'*

*'... For a country of about five million nominal Catholics,
the initial response was quite remarkable.'*

'... What the Church needs is not simply a renewal or an updating of methods of evangelising. Rather, what we desperately need is an inner conversion, a radical revolution in our mindsets and patterns of action. Gerald Arbuckle speaks of refounding as opposed to renewal. This refounding means going to the very cultural roots and a hope-filled journey into the paschal mystery for mission under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Unless we genuinely repent of institutional failures and unless we convert to the radical vision of Christ and let it imbue our attitudes, actions and pastoral practices, we will not be able to restore confidence and trust in the Church.'

Bishop Vincent Long challenges the church to be inclusive. In one such challenge he says:

'... The Church cannot have a better future if it persists in the old paradigm of triumphalism, self-reference and male dominance. So long as we continue to exclude women from the Church's governance structures, decision-making processes and institutional functions, we deprive ourselves of the richness of our full humanity. So long as we continue to make women invisible and inferior in the Church's language, liturgy, theology and law, we impoverish ourselves. Until we have truly incorporated the gift of women and the feminine dimension of our Christian faith, we will not be able to fully energise the life of the Church.'

BACKGROUND TO TODAY'S GOSPEL

As we distinguish between renewal and re-founding, let us encounter today's Gospel.

- *Mission is about travelling, not carrying unnecessary baggage*
The need to travel light, as we have seen in the example of Jesus in previous chapters

- *Mission is being sent by Jesus*
In Mark 3:13-16a:
"And he appointed twelve, whom he also named apostles, to be with him, and to be sent out to proclaim the message, and to have authority to cast out demons. So he appointed the twelve"

- *Mission is personal and communal*
In Mark 3:16b-19 we are informed of the names of the apostles.

- *Mission requires time to debrief with Jesus*
In MARK 6:30-32 we hear how Jesus debriefs the apostles
"The apostles gathered around Jesus, and told him all that they had done and taught. He said to them, 'Come away to a deserted place all by yourselves, and rest a while.' For many were coming and going, And they had no leisure even to eat. And they went away in the boat to a deserted place by themselves. "

THE GOSPEL OF MARK 6:7-13 & REFOUNDING

We read together today's passage.

It is Jesus who *calls* disciples.

It is Jesus who *sends* disciples.

'He called the twelve and began to send them out two by two, and gave them authority over the unclean spirits. He ordered them to take nothing for their journey except a staff; no bread, no bag, no money in their belts; but to wear sandals and not to put on two tunics. He said to them, 'Wherever you enter a house, stay there until you leave the place. If any place will not welcome you and they refuse to hear you, as you leave, shake off the dust that is on your feet as a testimony against them.'
So they went out and proclaimed that all should repent. They cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many who were sick and cured them.'

This passage is not the only Mission account.

Examples of other sending-forth Gospel accounts are:

- the sending of the seventy others in Luke 10:1-12
- the sending of Mary of Magdala in John 20:11-18
- the commissioning of the Eleven in Mathew 28:16-20
- and the threefold call to Peter to feed the lambs and tend the sheep of Jesus in John 21:15-19.

In understanding *re-founding and mission*, the four Gospels teach us how Jesus

- formed his disciples,
- loved them,
- prepared them,
- challenged them,
- commissioned them,
- debriefed them,
- taught them how to pray, and how to bring everything to prayer,
- taught them how to lead,
- how to face the challenges of that day.

In re-founding Jesus shows us

- our core mission,
- spirituality of mission,
- and our relationship with God in the mission of love and witness.

THE CALL TO EACH OF US

It is not only the call of twelve Jewish men.

It is the call of Mary of Magdala and other women in the scriptures.

It is the call of Gentile Christians from many ethnic groups.

It is the inclusive call to each of us.

MISSION & RE-FOUNDING

It is important that we do not limit the Gospel by our use of the English language.

Mission is not only a noun.

Mission is a verb – we not only have a mission.

Church is mission. Jesus missions the faith community.

In re-founding we seek the grace to overcome our fear of the future, our paralysis, our complacency.

In *re-founding* we seek the grace to overcome our temptations to discriminate and control.

In *re-founding* we continually find inspiration in the Word of God.

In *re-founding* we seek the freedom of Jesus.

In *re-founding* we seek the courage to follow the Holy Spirit wherever the Spirit leads us.

In *re-founding* we love as Jesus loves.

As Bishop Vincent Long says to us:

'This re-founding means going to the very cultural roots and a hope-filled journey into the paschal mystery for mission under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.'

Let us re-found and journey together.

Let us mission.

Let us pray.

Fr Gerry

readings: <https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/071121.cfm>

