

GOD SEES US BEFORE HE SENDS US.

Genesis 18:1-15, (21:1-7), Romans 5:1-8, Matthew 9:35-10:8, (9-23)

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

There are times when we feel that we are simply carrying on. We do what needs to be done. We go to work. We care for our families. We attend to our responsibilities. We pray and come to church. Yet deep within us there may be worries, disappointments, and questions that we carry quietly. In such moments, we may wonder whether God truly sees what we are going through.

The readings today remind us that He does.

In our first reading, Abraham and Sarah had waited a very long time for God's promise to be fulfilled. They were no longer young. What God had promised seemed impossible. When Sarah heard that she would bear a son, she laughed because she could no longer imagine such a future. Yet the Lord asked her, "Is anything too wonderful for the Lord?"

It is a question that reaches beyond Sarah's story and into our own lives. We all carry situations that seem beyond hope. We pray for healing, for reconciliation, for direction, for loved ones, and sometimes we wait much longer than we would like. Yet the story of Abraham and Sarah reminds us that God's timing is not our timing and God's possibilities are greater than our imagination. Where we see limitations, God continues to create new beginnings.

Saint Paul takes that same theme and brings it into the life of the Christian community. He writes, "Hope does not disappoint us." That is a remarkable statement because Paul was not writing from a life of comfort and ease. He knew suffering. He knew uncertainty. He knew what it meant to face hardship for the sake of the Gospel. Yet he could still speak of hope because his confidence rested not in circumstances but in God.

Christian hope is not pretending that everything is fine. It is trusting that God remains faithful even when life is difficult. The God who remembered Sarah is the same God who remains faithful to His people today. The God who fulfilled His promises in the past continues to work in our lives now, even when we cannot yet see the outcome.

When we come to the Gospel, we discover where that hope leads us. Matthew tells us that Jesus travelled through the cities and villages, teaching, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and healing the sick. Then we hear these moving words: "When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd."

Everything begins there. Before Jesus sends the disciples, He sees the people. Before He gives instructions, He sees the people. Before He speaks about the harvest, He sees the people.

The mission of the Church begins with the compassionate heart of Christ. Jesus does not simply see a crowd. He sees persons. He sees their fears, their struggles, their wounds, and their hopes. He sees those who are burdened and those who are searching for direction.

He sees people who feel lost and people who feel forgotten.

That Gospel speaks powerfully to our own time. Many people today are tired. Many carry anxieties about the future. Many struggle with loneliness. Many families carry burdens that remain hidden from others. Many migrants know what it means to live between two worlds, building a life in one country while carrying memories, relationships, and responsibilities from another.

Christ sees all of this. And when He sees, He responds with compassion.

This is important because the Church can sometimes become busy with activities, meetings, plans, and programmes. All of these things may be necessary, but they are not the heart of the Church. The heart of the Church is the compassionate love of Christ. If we lose that compassion, we lose something essential to our calling.

That is why Jesus says, "The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few." He is not simply speaking about recruitment. He is speaking about God's concern for the world. There are countless people who need encouragement, friendship, hope, healing, and the good news of God's love. The challenge is whether there are disciples willing to see others as Jesus sees them and serve them as Jesus served.

The disciples whom Jesus sent were not extraordinary people. They were ordinary men who answered an extraordinary call. They were sent not because they were perfect but because Christ chose them. The same remains true today. Christ continues to call ordinary people to participate in His mission of compassion, mercy, and hope.

Today we also give thanks for our African brothers and sisters among us. Their presence reminds us of the beauty and universality of the Church. We come from different nations, cultures, and languages, yet we gather around the same Lord and hear the same Gospel.

Christianity has deep roots in Africa. Some of the earliest Christian communities flourished there, and generations of faithful believers helped shape the faith that we share today. Their witness is part of our common Christian heritage. As we celebrate the presence of our African brothers and sisters, we are reminded that the Church is larger than any one nation or culture. We are one family in Christ, called together by the same Shepherd and nourished by the same grace.

And perhaps that brings us back to where we began. The God who came to Abraham and Sarah is the God who comes to us. The God who gave hope to the early Christians is the God who strengthens us today. The Christ who looked upon the crowds with compassion is the same Christ who looks upon His Church now. He sees us. He knows us. He loves us.

And having loved us, He sends us into the world to share that same compassion with others. May we trust His promises, live in His hope, and answer His call with faithful and generous hearts.

Amen.