

The harvest is plentiful. The laborers are few.

There is a lot of work to be done in this world.
In today's Gospel, Jesus said there are too few people to do it.
Jesus sends his disciples out to get that work done.

That's us, you all.

You. Me. All of us are called to go into the world and spread the Good News of healing, forgiveness, love, and acceptance from God through Jesus. Jesus preached about it during his life of ministry. That Good News needs to be shared with everyone.

There's a lot of work to be done.
And we are the people to do it.

Jesus has been traveling around and sees that people are harassed and helpless – like sheep without a shepherd.

Jesus disciples are called to get out there and defend the harassed, help the helpless, shepherd the sheep, feed the hungry, assist the sick, welcome the stranger, visit the lonely.

Let's get moving, folks. We better get started because there's a lot of work to do. Make it snappy. Jesus said the kingdom of heaven has come near. Time's a-wastin'.

We sang it this morning: Here I am. It is I, Lord. Send me. Send us.

What are you waiting for?

Is it too hard? Do you feel unqualified?

Today, we got the litany of names of Jesus disciples. I am 100% certain they felt they were unqualified as well. Four of them had been fishermen. One was a former tax collector – despised by one and all. There was a zealot – a political activist. That could actually be useful. And one was later proven to be a thief, liar, and traitor.

If that's who Jesus chose to do his work – to spread the Good News – then we're good to go – today – right now – just as we are.

On Thursday, I gave a homily about the saint of the day, Evelyn Underhill. She was a woman born in England in 1875. She should have had no say in what her life would be like. But she studied Christianity both through the Church of England and the Roman Catholic Church. She became an expert on Christian Mysticism. She wrote 50 books – novels, poetry, Christian non-fiction, and collections of essays and letters. In the early part of the 20th century, she was in demand as a lecturer and retreat leader.

According to the society of the time, she was only qualified to make tea and raise a family. She chose something different.

And she shared her thoughts on the subject of being qualified or worthy. She said, “A religious life is not available to only the most holy, the most saintly, the most devout – but to anyone who cares to nurture it and weave it into their everyday experiences.”

Jesus doesn’t call the most holy, saintly, and devout. Jesus spoke out AGAINST the religious leaders of his day. Jesus wants people who live a life and know how hard it can be to believe while doing their best to make ends meet.

There’s a lot of work to be done.

And we are the people to do it – just exactly as we are right now.

Still not convinced that you’re the right person for the job? You think Jesus is talking to someone else when he sends his disciples out into the world?

Think again. This week, a friend sent me a short video about Vivian Stancil. She is a 70-year-old competitive swimmer in the Senior Olympics. She’s not a great swimmer. In fact, she’s not even a very good swimmer. She finished last in every one of her races this year.

Vivian is totally blind. At 50 years old, she was obese. She didn’t know how to swim because she had never been in a swimming pool. She was terrified of the water. But her doctors told her she would be dead in 5 years if she didn’t do something to get healthy. She started swimming.

Vivian’s mantra is “I will never give up. I am NOT a give up person.” When asked what she hopes people can learn from her example, Vivian replied, “I hope they remember how I touched so many lives by people witnessing what I am doing. I can do it. I can try anything I set my heart to.”

We are exactly like Vivian. We are called to lead our lives...to be disciples of Jesus, to change the world and allow people to witness what we are doing no matter what fears or obstacles we must overcome.

There's a lot of work to be done.

And we are the people to do it – even if we think the odds are stacked against us.

We must start today. There's no reason not to get to work.

I had a friend, Craig, who worked as a photographer in New York City. He specialized in actor's head shots as well as body catalogs for models and body builders. He was amazed that someone who appeared to him as physically perfect...totally buff or beautiful – would cancel a photo shoot and reschedule it for the next week. They wanted extra time to lose 2 more pounds or pump their biceps a little bit bigger. Craig would see them the following week and they looked exactly the same to him.

There is no reason to put off this work we are called to do. We are as ready now as we ever will be. Stop dilly-dallying. This is no time to procrastinate.

There's a lot of work to be done.

And we are the people to do it – just exactly as you are today. Don't worry, we'll get better as we go along.

But we're still feeling inadequate, aren't we? We think we don't know how to help God make this world a better place. We're afraid we'll mess up. We don't know how to defend the harassed, help the helpless, shepherd the sheep, feed the hungry, assist the sick, welcome the stranger, visit the lonely. How exactly do we go into the world and spread the Good News of healing, forgiveness, love, and acceptance from God through Jesus?

In today's Gospel lesson, Jesus said we shouldn't worry about it. When the time comes, you'll know what to do because the Holy Spirit will be with you. What you are to say and do will be given to you at that time; for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of God speaking through you.

Now we aren't ventriloquist dummies waiting to have God's voice come out of our mute lips. But rather we study Jesus' teachings, we are sympathetic, maybe even empathetic. We are loving, caring, and interested people of God. We may not always say or do the exact right thing at the exact right moment. But we **show up**. Just getting out there is the majority of the battle. We share God's love and our love and that's the Spirit of God speaking through us.

Last weekend we celebrated LGBTQ+ Pride here in Albuquerque. There is often dissent about the word “Pride.” But the Pride celebrated by and for the queer community isn’t a vain or boastful pride. It is not a pride of inflated egos or narcissism. The Pride celebrated by members of the LGBTQ+ community is a pride of belonging – of being good enough – of not listening to anyone tell us we are “less than.” It’s a Pride of knowing and accepting we are worthy of God’s healing, forgiveness, love and acceptance....and knowing that we.... each and everyone us gathered today...are worthy of taking that healing, forgiveness, love and acceptance out into the world.

There’s a lot of work to be done.
And we are the people to do it – just as we are right here, right now.

Jesus calls us all to be his disciples.
There’s a lot of work to be done.
And we are the people to do it.
The world is a big, cruel, and unruly place.
We must not feel inadequate or unprepared...because we are worthy and totally ready for this – whether you think so or not.
Do not be afraid. We do this work for Jesus by people witnessing us doing it.
We cannot wait until the time is perfect.... for us. The time we are needed is now.
Be proud of who you are and what we are called to do and show that confidence in God’s name.

There’s a lot of work to be done.
And we are the people to do it.

I have quoted a favorite theologian of mine before. I will close with one of their famous inspirational messages today. Ru Paul Charles reminds us.

You Betta Work.