

Saturday of the 18th Week 'B' – 8 August 2026

Habakkuk 1:12-2:4; Matthew 17:14-20

H O M I L Y

Some time earlier, Jesus had sent His disciples out on a mission, with the command and authority to preach the Good News, to heal the sick and to cast out demons. They had returned full of joy and pride that even the demons obeyed them. In today's Gospel we witness one of their first setbacks, and we can also observe what might be called Jesus' teaching method.

When Jesus sent them out on their mission, He does not seem to have given them either many explanations or many instructions. He simply told them what they had to do and, above all, emphasized the attitude they were to adopt – an attitude of great detachment and great poverty, for they were not to take anything with them except the bare essentials, that is to say, what they were already wearing.

It does not appear that the disciples boasted to Jesus about having failed to cast out demons in certain cases. It was the father of a young boy possessed by a demon who brought his son to Jesus, begging Him to deliver him. He simply added, without pressing the point: 'I took him to your disciples, and they were unable to deliver him.' There is no tone of reproach in these words, but simply faith in Jesus' greater power.

So the disciples, no doubt feeling a little sheepish, approach Jesus and ask him: 'Why were we unable to do so?' Jesus does not reproach them either for failing or for not reporting their failure. He simply states that the reason is that 'your faith is weak'. And we know that, in the Gospel of Mark, Jesus replies that this sort of demon can only be cast out through prayer and fasting. Here we already have an indication of the close link between faith and prayer.

Jesus' teaching method consists of allowing His disciples to take their first steps with minimal instruction, and then analyzing with them why they have not succeeded, whilst urging them to give glory to God when they have succeeded. This is how God deals with us. We must learn to handle our failures just as we do our successes. Our successes must not make us proud, but rather lead us to give glory to God. Our failures must neither overwhelm us nor discourage us. We must simply come to Jesus then and say to Him, as the disciples do in today's Gospel: 'Why did I not succeed?'. He will

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then help us to understand.

Armand Veilleux

- Today we commemorate Saint Dominic