

**Weekly Gospel Readings**  
**The 1st Sunday of Epep**

**Apostles Sent to Serve**

*“Behold, I send you out as lambs among wolves.”*

On the First Sunday of the blessed month of Epep, the Church reads [Luke 10:1-20](#). In this reading, Christ sends out seventy apostles, two by two, into the world to preach the good news, not only to the Jews but now to the Gentiles, to those beyond the covenant. Christ describes how service is not easy, how we need to support each other to serve effectively, and how God supports all our service efforts.

When Christ tells them, “Go your way; behold, I send you out as lambs among wolves,” ([Luke 10:3](#)) He is not deterring the apostles with fear, but awakening them to the reality of service. The path of true ministry is not smooth, it is marked with trial, misunderstanding, and sacrifice. As Fr. Tadros Yacoub Malaty reminds us, “His mission is not an easy one, a way paved with roses.” As St. Augustine beautifully explains, “By devouring the lambs, wolves turn into lambs, through the meekness of His lambs, namely His apostles, which is the goal of this mission.” In other words, the Church conquers not through dominance but through the meekness and self-giving of her servants. It is only through humility and sacrificial love that hearts are transformed.

However, despite the difficulties we may face, God always ensures that we have the support we need. In His divine wisdom, Christ sends out the apostles two by two, ensuring that each apostle has a partner in service to provide not only divine strength but mutual support. As explained in the Book of Ecclesiastes, “Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow. But woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up!” ([Ecclesiastes 4:9-10](#)). Thus, it is necessary to work with and depend on others to help with service, as we see it in our Coptic tradition where: bishops serve with their clergy, priests with their deacons, servants in teams. Even the apostles, who received grace directly from Christ Himself, needed one another.

Moreover, and despite being sent among wolves, despite the burdens they may carry, Christ assures the Apostles, “Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall hurt you” ([Luke 10:19](#)). This authority is not earthly power, but divine protection and spiritual strength. This promise applies to every servant in the Body of Christ, no matter how small or large it may seem. As St. Augustine beautifully stated, “It is far better for you to be just a finger in the body, than to be an eye outside the body.” We do not need to be prominent, we need to be within the Body, faithful and committed to our part in Christ's mission.

In the last verse of today's reading the Lord says: “Nevertheless, do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.” ([Luke 10:20](#)) What the Lord is telling us is that our greatest joy must not be the fruits of our services, but the fact that we belong to God, and our names are written in the Book of Life.

***Lord, let us always remember that we need Your love and support in all our services. We ask you to continue to support us and motivate us to serve others with all our hearts, minds, and bodies.***

***Amen.***

**Sources:**

- Bible, English Standard Version
- Catena Bible, Commentary on Luke
- Commentaries on the Gospel of St. Luke by Father Tadros Malaty