



Travelling with Christ's peace

It's the beginning of July and the good weather invites us to expand our horizons and enjoy a change of scenery. We visit our loved ones and the less-explored areas of our environment. If we have to stay over, no problem: a credit card will guarantee a good bed in a motel and meals in a restaurant. We don't have to worry about anything.

We enjoy mobility and freedom that the people of Jesus' era could never imagine. In fact, his contemporaries' horizons did not extend any farther than the boundaries of their own villages. What lay beyond was unknown and probably hostile. If they dared to venture out, they could only hope for support from family members who had already scaled the traditional walls. They were not always certain if they could rely on social networks based on a common culture or religion. They would have to contact and trust people. If none of these scenarios were in place, their voyages would be difficult and dangerous.

When Jesus sent his disciples ahead of him, they were well aware of the hazards. A striking image describes their plight: the disciples were like sheep among wolves. They would be thrown into extremely precarious situations without any support. Even conventional greetings would mark them as strangers and no one could be certain how they would be received. In confronting these challenges, the disciples had to rely on a Power that was greater than their family and social networks.

This Power was their clear and transparent relationship with Jesus. This reference to Christ opened the doors and hearts of those they met and provided support when they encountered serious situations and difficult people...

What should we learn from these brief narratives of the disciples' voyages? Though we enjoy easy and spontaneous mobility, our social universe no longer favors enthusiastic references to Christ. It's up to us to promote our faith, as did the first disciples, and with prayerful anticipation, record the positive effects of our connection to Christ.

Recalling St. Paul's words, these happy summer experiences help us to understand our part in a new creation. Our crucified Lord has brought us peace which enables us to be heirs of the New Jerusalem, the dream of the Jewish exiles. In this season of mobility and abundance, my wish is that today's disciples travel with Christ's peace. Enjoy the summer!

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