

**Homily for Day 3 of WUCWO General Assembly, Dakar.
Thursday 18 October, fThe Feast of St. Luke the Evangelist**

St. Luke and the Jesus who Loves the Poor: “As the Master of the Harvest to send out labourers to his harvest,” (Luke 10,2)

Sometimes, we Catholics, we do not read the Bible enough. Do you read the Bible? Do you pray with it? And do you reflect on its relevance for the life of your organization? I am sure that the answer to this question is yes for many of us here. I am sure that many of us here know what a beautiful thing it is to take a short passage of Scripture and to sit quietly with it and pray with it, letting it speak to our heart.

I don't know if you have noticed, but each of the evangelists tell a slightly different story about Jesus. Luke, whose feast we celebrate today, wrote for an audience who were not from a Jewish background, but were gentiles. For this reason, he stressed qualities about Jesus that would be attractive to anyone. He told a story in three parts: First, Jesus calls us and makes us his friend; Second, Jesus missions us; Third, Jesus missions us especially to the poor.

First, Luke describes Jesus as an attractive friend. He describes Jesus as loving to everyone. He describes Jesus as often going off alone to pray to his Father, but also being willing to teach others how to pray. The Jesus of Luke is sensitive to the suffering of women. However, above all, Luke describes Jesus as the man who works miracles and heals the wounds of others. At the beginning of the ministry of Jesus, we hear him say “I have come to bring good news to the poor.” Again and again, Luke describes the compassionate miracles of Jesus in healing the wounds of others. Luke intends us to recognize that we ourselves are wounded that that Jesus the healer gives us the free gift of consolation in this life as well as eternal life after death.

Secondly, as well as calling us and healing us, Jesus missions us. This is the theme we hear in the Gospel of today. Jesus says, the harvest is abundant but the labourers are few. So ask the master of the harvest to send out labourers for his harvest. Go on your way!” This is a message that Luke intends all the readers of his Gospel to take to heart: we must go on our way proclaiming the Good news of Jesus Christ.

Thirdly, I already said, the Jesus of Luke expects us to go first to the poor, just as we were once poor and Jesus came to us. Luke is the only evangelist who writes of the two thieves who were crucified with Jesus. It is in Luke's Gospel that we hear the beautiful words of Jesus to the Good Thief: “Today you will be with me in paradise!” The Jesus of Luke asks also to reach out to the poor in a similar way.

Finally, what relevance does this feast of St. Luke have for us as we begin our Statutory days in our General Assembly? Well, we heard yesterday how are spiritual life has to begin with a sense of being gifted by God, gifted by Jesus. We heard of how we need to have a sense of how Jesus gives us the free gift of healing us, and then letting all our actions flow from this. Second, we heard how we are all sent on mission. WUCWO is on a mission. Indeed, during our statutory days, we make concrete decisions about the next four years of our mission. Let us pray that we make wise decisions, inspired by the fact that we live in deep friendship with Jesus. Finally, we remember the poor. Indeed, as I look at the five resolutions we have proposed, I see that we are indeed remembering the poor. Our five resolutions state: A healthy planet depends on all of us; let us take care of the family in difficult situations; let us eliminate discrimination and violence against women; let us educate to respond to the call of holiness, and educate for the responsible use of new technologies.

Let us pray that we can be nourished today by the compassionate Jesus to imitate him in the decisions we make in this General Assembly.

Readings

- First reading: Second Letter of St. Paul to Timothy 4:9-17
- Psalm 144:10-11. 12-13ab. 17-18
- Gospel: Luk. 10:1-9