

# Go Forth...

A SERVICE OF U.S. CATHOLIC MISSION ASSOCIATION

## MISSIONARY COMMENTARY

# ALL WE NEED IS LOVE



### SUNDAY READINGS:

Acts 6:1-7

Psalms 33:1-2, 4-5, 18-19

1 Peter 2: 4-9

John 14:1-12

### COMMENTARY

Service, community and home, a dwelling place. These are the key words and themes that permeate the readings in today's liturgy. And what powerful words they are! If you read my reflections monthly, you probably notice how often I express the power of words. Having been an English major in college and then a Master's in Formative

Spirituality, it is no wonder that the importance of words jump out to greet me in every reading that I do. As I was progressing in learning Portuguese in Brazil, the same delight happened to me.

**Service:** I cannot say anything new about the importance of service, except to emphasize that it is an integral part of our life as Christians because of our Baptism. We are all called to seek out and embrace the needs of the most vulnerable according to the life example that Jesus has shown us. Our current reality cries out to us to be the hands, feet and voice of Jesus every day. We are very much aware of how this Christian practice is being ignored by many, and I wonder if it is fear of the repercussions. Is it due to a complacency because everything is fine in my world? Or am I too busy? I know that there is need out there, and when I retire, I will dedicate more time. I promise...

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**Community:** Our family is our first community which unites us and where we learn how to love and care for others. I am deeply aware that this is not a reality for many, many people whose families have not been one of love and care. It is heart breaking to see the pain of parents who have lost their children due to violence, drugs or gang actions. This is exactly why our families are only the beginning of creating communities, faith communities that can help to heal those who have been hurt in their families. Our prayers and support for the organizations that specialize in healing and accompaniment is an excellent way to live out this important mission.

**Dwelling Place:** St. Peter speaks of building a spiritual house and Jesus speaks of the Father's house with many dwelling places. I see this as the most important mission we have in this life as we prepare for our eternal life. Rumi once wrote: "We're all just walking each other home." We are seeking to understand and live the love of God in this life so as to be in that place that God has prepared for us. Jesus is, indeed, the Way, the Truth and the Life. Our relationship with God is the most important task of our life here. God's love is infinite, always present and always merciful. We are invited by God to love God back, to embrace a life centered in this mutual love. God will never separate the divine love from us even when we reject or ignore God's love. It is this love that is the reason why we do what we do and who we desire to become. Time has to be given to develop this love. Our service and community living will flow out of this love, but only if we spend time alone with our Beloved. Devotional prayers are good, but the silence in the presence of God is essential to grow in love.

The ending of the Gospel has a line that knocks me off my feet: "...whoever believes in me will do the works I do the works I do, and will do greater ones than these..." How awesome and humbling is this.

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## NOTES ON THE SUNDAY READINGS:

**First Reading - Acts of the Apostles 6:1-7:** This reading gives us an inspiring vision of service and its relation to community. A need was perceived to help the widows who were often neglected by the ancient cultures. The Apostles hear the plea and not desiring to resolve the problem alone, call the community together to create a new service so that others can help the widows. Those indicated by the community had only two requirements to be chosen: “filled with the Spirit and wisdom.”

**Responsorial Psalm - Psalm: 33:1-2, 4-5, 18-19:** The love and mercy of God permeate this portion of Psalm 33. The justice and righteousness of God is sung by all. The trust and kindness of God can always be relied on no matter the life situation that we face. All we need is faith, the psalmist says it is “fear” but we know this word translates to be the faith and trust that we are called upon to have in God.

**Second Reading - 1 Peter 2: 4-9:** What a wonderful letter we have received from the community of St. Peter! We need to reread this portion of the letter every time we are discouraged and overcome by so many negative forces and situations that surround us. We are “chosen and precious in the sight of God.” We are to become “a spiritual house” where others can enter, feel supported and come to know our God through Jesus Christ. The house must be built within us before we can welcome someone in.

**Gospel - John 14:1-12:** The Gospel continues with the beautiful imagery that we see in the other readings of the day. There are many dwellings, “houses” in the Father’s house. Our faith will lead us to these places of welcome and protection when we are troubled. We know that the true dwelling is in union with our loving God and Savior Jesus Christ. God indeed is the way and the truth and the life who calls us to service to those in need.

Notes and Commentary by Sr. Nancy Schramm, OSF. Sr. Nancy is a past-president of the USCMA and currently serves in a small rural parish. She also serves her religious community on various committees. She is a spiritual director and translates for other groups in Portuguese.

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