

When people say to you, “Just one last thing before I go,” you never know if this will be something you’ve already done, or a doozie of a request. In the case of Jesus, it was a doozie. “Just one last thing before I go,” he says at the end of Mark’s gospel: “Go out to all the world and tell the Good News.” The disciples probably thought, “What?” We sang that final command of Jesus with the responsorial psalm today, and some of you may have thought, “That command is surely meant for other people, not for me.” Problem is, it seems to be meant for all of us. How on earth are we supposed to tell good news to the world?

Jesus’ words aren’t even part of Psalm 117. He hadn’t been born when it was written. This is the shortest psalm in the bible - two verses long. Our cantor sang all of it today. But the shortest psalm has the biggest theme: “Praise the Lord, all you nations; glorify him, all you peoples.” We sang it today because in the gospel, Jesus gives surprising news about who gets saved: “People will come from the east and the west and from the north and the south and will recline at table in the kingdom of God.” He came to save all people - not just a few. Psalm 117, which invites all peoples to glorify the Lord, prepares us for that good news. The lectionary adds the command of Jesus as the refrain: “Go out to all the world.” All the world isn’t going to end up at table in the kingdom of God by accident. Someone has to invite people. Apparently that someone is you and me.

During this Year of Faith, the Vatican is focusing on evangelization. Catholics are to bring the gospel to the world and invite others in. It’s not as hard as you may think. Most Catholic parents already evangelize. They share faith with their kids, teach them about Jesus, and bring them to church. Not all children accept the invitation. But Jesus asked us to tell the Good News; he didn’t promise people would respond.

People share faith in other ways. I’ve seen a lot of faith on Facebook, of all places. People ask for prayers, and they receive buckets of them. Other “friends”, who do not have faith, see at a glance that many people do.

Pope Francis said at World Youth Day last month, “We cannot keep ourselves shut up in parishes, in our communities when so many people are waiting for the Gospel! ... It's not enough simply to open the door in welcome, but we must go out through that door to seek and meet the people." However, we do it - in families, in social media, or among our own friends - let’s invite - even if it’s one last thing before you leave. Ask people if they have a church. Invite them here. Jesus asked us to go to the world; we can begin here at home.