



Going on mission is not like tourism, and Jesus cautions them: “you will find persecutions”. Jesus’ dispatch [of the disciples] on mission does not guarantee their success, just as it does not protect them from failure and suffering. They have to take into account both the possibility of rejection and that of persecution. This is somewhat frightening but it is the truth.

The disciple is called to conform his life to Christ who was persecuted by men, knew rejection, abandonment and death on the cross. There is no Christian mission marked by tranquility! Difficulties and tribulations are part of the work of evangelization and we are called to find in them the opportunity to test the authenticity of our faith and of our relationship with Jesus. We must consider these difficulties as the opportunity to be even more missionary and to grow in that trust toward God, our Father who does not abandon his children during the storm. Amid the difficulties of Christian witness in the world, we are not forgotten but always assisted by the attentive concern of the Father. Jesus reassures the disciples, saying: “Do not fear!”.

Let us not forget these words: always, when we experience any tribulation, any persecution, anything that causes us to suffer, let us listen to the voice of Jesus in our hearts: “Do not fear! Do not fear! Go Forth! I am with you!”. Do not fear those who mock you and mistreat you and do not fear those who ignore you or respect you “to your face”, but fight the Gospel “behind your back”. We all know them. Jesus does not leave us all alone, because we are precious to him.

*Pope Francis*