

Historic Commentary



(Seventh Sunday after Pentecost - Year B)

The Liturgy Letter

Commentary on Mark 6:1-13 from Selected Church Fathers

[Thomas Aquinas' curated commentary on Mark 6](#), from a 13th century document called the *Catena Aurea* that contains compiled verse by verse commentary on the Gospels from the Patristics and others.

[Justin Martyr](#): Jesus came as the son of a carpenter. He was not physically attractive, just as the prophets had predicted of him. He was merely a carpenter, making ploughs and yokes, and instructing us by such symbols of righteousness to avoid an inactive life.

[Ephrem the Syrian](#):

The ordinary workmen will come to the son of Joseph singing:

“Blessed be your coming, O master of workers everywhere.

The imprint of your labor is seen in the ark,

And in the fashioning of the tabernacle

Of the congregation that was for a time only!

Our whole craft praises you, who are our eternal glory.

Make for us a yoke that is light, even easy, for us to bear.

Establish that measure in us in which there can be no falseness.”

[John Cassian](#): In some cases he so richly poured forth the mighty work of healing that the Evangelist was led to exclaim: “He healed all their sick.” But among others the unfathomable depth of Christ’s goodness was so thwarted that it was said: “And Jesus could do there no mighty works because of their unbelief.” So the bounty of God is actually curtailed temporarily according to the receptivity of our faith. So it is said to one: “According to your faith may it be to you,” and to another: “Go your way, and as you have believed so let it be to you,” and to another “Let it be to you according as you will,” and again to another: “Your faith has made you whole.”

[John Cassian](#): If the faith of those who bring them or of the sick is lacking, it may prevent those who possess the gift of healing from exercising it.

[Jerome](#): Are all commanded not to have two coats, nor food in their possession, money in their purse, only a staff in the hand and shoes on the feet? Are all commanded to sell all they possess and give it to the poor, and follow Jesus? Of course not. This command is for those who earnestly desire to respond fully to grace.... The Lord says in the Gospel to him

who had boasted of having kept the whole law: “If you will be perfect, go and sell all that you have, and give to the poor, and come, follow me.” He said this to those who wish to be wholly mature in faith, that he might not seem to be laying a heavy burden on unwilling shoulders.

Augustine: What is forbidden is neither the carrying nor the possessing of two coats, but more distinctly the wearing of two coats at the same time. The words say: “and not put on two coats.” What counsel is conveyed to them by this? They ought to walk not in duplicity, but in simplicity.

Cyprian: One who is anointing should be baptized, so that having received the chrism [the anointing], he may be anointed of God, and have in him the grace of Christ. Those to be baptized and anointed with the oil of chrismation, receive the oil sanctified on the altar of the eucharist. But one who has neither an altar nor a church cannot duly consecrate the creature of oil.