

Dear Brothers & Sisters in Christ,

### **FREE FROM ALL 'BAGGAGE'**

Once, a rector of a minor seminary in a particular diocese lived a very simple life. He had just two pairs of clothing and would travel by public transport. He was very regular with the Eucharistic celebration and the reciting of the breviary. However, during his five years of tenure as the rector of the seminary, when it came to the final selection or the dismissal of the seminarians, he would invariably promote candidates belonging to his caste group and dismiss those belonging to other castes on silly grounds, such as being late for prayers, not doing the manual work properly, etc.

A mere external appearance does not make one simple when one's inner being is full of evil intentions. True simplicity lies in being fully free - free from all sorts of 'bag and baggage' - material, psychological, and ideological. In today's gospel, that is precisely Jesus' exhortation to His disciples before He sent the Seventy on the mission.

We, as devout Catholics, religious, priests, and nuns, too, are very often found carrying such bag and baggage. These act as a major hurdle to our mission of proclaiming the Good News. The material, psychological, and ideological baggage that we carry often becomes an obstacle as disciples in carrying out our responsibilities faithfully with dedication and total commitment. As in the case of the above rector, more than the material possessions, what really hinders us is our psychological and ideological baggage. The existing conflicts between different groups of caste, rite, language, and region are no secrets in the Catholic Church. These conflicts divide the Catholic community into different fractions.

Today's gospel emphasizes the need to be free from all bondages, baggage, and self-glory to serve the Lord and spread His message of Love. Jesus himself was free from all sorts of obstacles - from all material possessions, attachment to men and women, greed, ambition, public opinion and image, authority, and religious laws that bound one rather than set one free.

Are we free? As we reflect on this gospel passage, let us introspect and find for ourselves the kind of baggage we carry which becomes an obstacle in our mission of proclaiming the Good News of the Lord, both in our word and daily life example.

God bless you,



**Fr. Xavier Bazil**  
*Parochial Vicar*