

Acts 15; 22-31

John 15: 12-17

In today's Reading and Gospel, we notice the use of some important words: Delegates, Sent, Elect, Command, Chose and, perhaps most important, Commissioned. All these words suggest to me the giving and expectation of an authority and responsibility to someone else on behalf of the giver.

So, in the Reading, we hear of the Apostles and elders: 'Choosing DELEGATES to SEND to Antioch.'; 'We have decided unanimously to ELECT DELEGATES and to SEND them.' ; 'Accordingly, we are SENDING... Paul, Barnabas, Judas and Silas, men we highly respect, who will confirm by word of mouth what we have written in this letter.'

Authority has been given to trusted individuals to deliver important information to the community in Antioch. These men carry out the responsibility they have been given and the people of Antioch were, 'Delighted with the encouragement it gave them.'

How much more pertinent is the COMMAND(ment) given by Jesus in the Gospel to , "Love one another, as I have loved you." And then, "You did not CHOOSE me, no, I CHOSE you.; and I COMMISSIONED you to go out and bear fruit." "What I COMMAND you is to love one another."

We too, as followers of Christ, have been delegated to carry out this, the highest responsibility of all. And what are the results of doing so? We are no longer to be called servants but Friends. And the Father will give us anything we ask him in Jesus' name.