

Homily based on the readings from October 28, 2025 (Ephesians 2.19-22; Luke 6.12-16)

I suspect most people here, at some point, have received a visit from a pair of Mormon missionaries. Just to be clear, while I have the greatest respect for individuals who dedicate two years of their lives to this kind of work, the theology they espouse is fundamentally incompatible with Catholic Christianity. If you spend some time talking to them – which I wholeheartedly encourage – you will realize that they have developed a few standard strategies for engaging people in conversation.

One of the Mormons' main talking points, which I have heard several times over the years, has to do with the Apostles. “What would you say,” they ask, “if we told you that there are successors to the original twelve Apostles who are alive and well today, ministering on behalf of Jesus Christ?” In their minds, this question pertains to a group known as the Quorum of the Twelve – who oversee the Mormon Church from Salt Lake City. Nevertheless, whenever this particular conversation comes

up, it provides *us* with a unique opportunity to engage in our *own* evangelization. As Catholics, we know that there *are* modern-day Apostles in the world today – not just in Utah, but across the globe. At this point, in fact, there are not just twelve of them – but closer to 5600. The individuals we are speaking about, of course, are the bishops of the Catholic Church.

In the Gospel reading, we just saw Jesus call the original twelve Apostles – including Simon and Jude – whose feast we celebrate today. In the Acts of the Apostles, we see the remaining eleven – with divine guidance – select a replacement for Judas Iscariot. This process has continued – uninterrupted – to the present day. As the Fathers of the Second Vatican Council remind us:

Christ the Lord, in whom the full revelation of the supreme God is brought to completion, commissioned the Apostles to preach to all men that Gospel which is the source of all saving truth and moral teaching, and to impart to them heavenly gifts. ... But in order to

keep the Gospel forever whole and alive within the Church, the Apostles left bishops as their successors, “handing over” to them “the authority to teach in their own place.”

The bishops we have today – Bishop Reidy, Archbishop Coyne, Pope Leo – are quite literally the Apostles of the modern age. There is absolutely no discontinuity between them and the original Twelve who were chosen by Jesus himself.

When we think about the first generation of Apostles, we need to remember that they were flawed and feeble human beings – just like everyone else. Every single one of them forsook his commitment to Christ, abandoning him at the moment of his Crucifixion. Nevertheless, all but one of them returned to Jesus in due time – witnessing his Resurrection and Ascension, and receiving the fullness of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. That is the legacy of the Apostles we have all inherited as Catholic Christians – a *priceless* gift every one of us receives from the hands of Jesus Christ himself.