

Today we hear in the First Reading from the Book of Ezra, who lived in the fifth century before Christ.

Living during the time of the Babylonian Exile, Ezra was sent after Babylon was conquered by the Persian empire, to Judea with a group of exiles. It is a bitter-sweet task, as they have three tasks to perform. First, they are to rebuild the Temple; second is to reinstate the Jewish Law for those people who have been living in exile; and the third is the restoration of the Holy City Jerusalem.

This book recounts these experiences, and today's reading is a prayer by Ezra ... first confessing the sins of the people, and secondly praising God for His mercy to His people.

In the Gospel, the Twelve Apostles are sent by Jesus to "*proclaim the Kingdom of God.*" The word "*Apostle*" which we may take as a title since that is how we tend to use it; comes from the Greek word *apostello*, which means "to be sent forth" or "one who is sent forth."

Elsewhere in the Gospels, after His resurrection, Our Lord says: "*As the Father has sent me, so I send you.*"

We too, are '*sent*' by virtue of our Baptism to go forth and proclaim the Gospel ... through our words ... through our actions ... and by the manner in which we live our lives.

As we approach this altar to receive the Sacred Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ; let us pray that the graces of this Eucharist which we participate in today ... may empower us that as we are sent forth from this place ... we might embody the message of the Gospel in our lives ... and in accepting the mission of the Gospel ... evangelize those whom we meet in our daily lives.