Neither Jesus nor his disciples fit the bill (possessed the ordinary training or family background to be chosen religious leaders).  They lacked the formal training in the Word of God which rabbis had.  They did not have the family background to be priests.

  The disciples were chosen by Jesus not for their aptitude. Among the chosen were fisherman whose labor was honorable, and there was also the tax collector whose profession was sinful.  Jesus did train them himself by letting them watch him for three years.  From day-to-day experience, these apostles learned the vision and authority and teaching of Jesus.  This training was not your typical training in the law that bound Israel to God.  It placed new demands on his followers which time and again Peter, for example, failed to understand.  Jesus as a teacher demonstrated more patience than a typical parent or teacher.  Jesus put his trust in the Holy Spirit which would fortify his apostles after his resurrection.

Jesus, the teacher, gives instructions to his apostles that are both idealistic and realistic.  Perhaps I can prove my point with these illustrations from today’s Gospel.

Hospitality to this day remains a key characteristic of Semitic and Arab peoples.  In the day of Jesus, it was the same.  Jesus took advantage of this hospitality which naturally came to his people to welcome the stranger.  Jesus taught his disciples to expect this hospitality and accept it.  The comment from Jesus on staying put was  really a demand that the disciples not seek better lodging or better food.  It was understandable but not permitted to move from place to place looking for something better.

Jesus was realistic, however, in planning for some hosts to reject the Gospel of sin and forgiveness, the defeat of evil spirits and the curing of the sick.  “Shake the dust from your feet,” Jesus said, as a warning against them and move on.  Perhaps Jesus was thinking about the prophet Amos who famously condemned the priest of Bethel, the King’s Sanctuary.  When this priest did not listen to Amos and told Amos to leave Bethel, Amos defended himself.  “I am not your kind of prophet meaning attached to this royal sanctuary or a prophet by birth as a son of a prophet.”  Amos replied that he already had his own source of living apart from the royal sanctuary.  Amos proudly told the priest, “I am a shepherd and a dresser of sycamores.”

This was a plant native to the Middle East that produced figs encased in a husk.  To dress the tree meant to pierce the husks with a sharp stick for the fruit to open and ripen.  This was part of the diet of the poor and naturally did not give much income to the dresser.  Therefore, our man Amos was poor but proud of how he honestly earned his small income.  He did not need the income given the prophets serving the King at Bethel.  Amos moved on from Bethel because he was called by God and free to preach like a true prophet.  He earned his daily bread on his own.

  Realistically, some will ignore the Gospel of sin and forgiveness, of temptation and grace.  To those whose minds are closed, the Gospel seems crazy.  I do find it interesting today that Jesus did not recommend so much to turn away people who do not believe as much as he said, “Move on and shake your feet of the dust of their lodging.”  I could be mistaken, but is it possible that Jesus demands less that we deny others what we have but that we part from those who do not believe?

Thus, we do not permit those with whom we disagree to influence our teaching.    This may look like we are practicing the same hospitality and patience with others that Jesus offered his own disciples.  Jesus took a long-term view on misunderstanding.  He trusted that the Holy Spirit would enlighten his chosen apostles after his resurrection.  Let us too rely on the Holy Spirit reciting the Glorious Mysteries of the Rosary with more faith.  Oh God, enlighten those who are ignorant of the truth.  Help them to undergo a conversion of heart in your time according to your will.  Give us patience like your Son Jesus.