



# Living the Gospel



**Fourteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time — July 04, 2010**

**Theme: "Let the Peace of Christ control your hearts; let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly."**

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## **Gathering Prayer**

**All:** Father, through the obedience of Jesus, your servant and your Son, you raised a fallen world. Free us from sin and bring us the joy that lasts forever. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.

## **Exploring the Word**

**Gospel Reading: Luke 10:1-12, 17-20**

<sup>1</sup> After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them out ahead of him in pairs, to all the towns and places he himself would be visiting. <sup>2</sup> And he said to them, 'The harvest is rich but the laborers are few, so ask the Lord of the harvest to send laborers to do his harvesting. <sup>3</sup> Start off now, but look, I am sending you out like lambs among wolves. <sup>4</sup> Take no purse with you, no haversack and no sandals. Salute no one on the road. <sup>5</sup> Whatever house you enter, let your first words be, "Peace to this house!" <sup>6</sup> And if a man of peace lives there, your peace will go and rest on him; if not, it will come back to you. <sup>7</sup> Stay in the same house, taking what food and drink they have to offer, for the laborer deserves his wages; do not move from house to house. <sup>8</sup> Whenever you go into a town where they make you welcome, eat what is put before you. <sup>9</sup> Cure those in it who are sick, and say, "The kingdom of God is very near to you." <sup>10</sup> But whenever you enter a town and they do not make you welcome, go out into its streets and say, <sup>11</sup> "We wipe off the very dust of your town that clings to our feet, and leave it with you. Yet be sure of this: the kingdom of God is very near." <sup>12</sup> I tell you, on the great Day it will be more bearable for Sodom than for that town. <sup>17</sup> The seventy-two came back rejoicing. 'Lord,' they said,

'even the devils submit to us when we use your name.'<sup>18</sup> He said to them, 'I watched Satan fall like lightning from heaven.'<sup>19</sup> Look, I have given you power to tread down serpents and scorpions and the whole strength of the enemy; nothing shall ever hurt you.<sup>19</sup> Look, I have given you power to tread down serpents and scorpions and the whole strength of the enemy; nothing shall ever hurt you.<sup>20</sup> Yet do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you; rejoice instead that your names are written in heaven.'

## **Gospel Notes**

**1-12.** Those who followed our Lord and received a calling from him (cf. Lk 9:57-62) included many other disciples in addition to the Twelve (cf. Mk 2:15). We do not know who most of them were; but undoubtedly some of them were with him all along, from when Jesus was baptized by John up to the time of his ascension—for example, Joseph called Barabbas and Matthias (cf. Acts 1:21-26). We can also include Cleopas and his companion, whom the risen Christ appeared to on the road to Emmaus (cf. Lk 24:13-35).

From among these disciples, our Lord chooses seventy-two for a special assignment. Of them, as of the Apostles (cf. Lk 9:1-5), he demands total detachment and complete abandonment to divine providence.

From Baptism onwards every Christian is called by Christ to perform a mission. Therefore, the Church, in our Lord's name, "makes to all the laity an earnest appeal in the Lord to give a willing, noble and enthusiastic response to the voice of Christ, who at this hour is summoning them more pressingly, and to the urging of the Holy Spirit. The younger generation should feel this call to be addressed in a special way to them; they should welcome it eagerly and generously. It is the Lord himself, by this Council, who is once more inviting all the laity to unite themselves to him ever more intimately, to consider his interest as their own (cf. Phil 2:5), and to join in his mission as Savior. It is the Lord who is again sending them into every town and every place where to himself is to come (cf. Lk 10:1). He sends them on the Church's apostolate, on an apostolate that is one yet has different forms and methods, an apostolate where they are to show themselves his cooperators, doing their full share continually in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord their labor cannot be lost (cf. 1 Cor 15:58)" (Vatican II, *Apostolicam actuositatem*, 33).

**3-4.** Christ wants to instill apostolic daring into his disciples; this is why he says, "I sent you out", which leads St John Chrysostom to comment: "This suffices to give us encouragement, to give us confidence and to ensure that we are not afraid of our assailants" (*Hom. On St Matthew*, 33). The Apostles' and disciples boldness stemmed from their firm conviction that they were on a God-given mission: they acted, as Peter the Apostle confidently explained to the Sanhedrin, in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, "for there is no other name under heaven by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

"And the Lord goes on," St Gregory the Great adds, "'Carry no purse, no bag, no sandals; and salute no one on the road.' Such should be the confidence the preacher places in God that even if he is not provided with the necessities of life, he is convinced that they will come his way. This will ensure that worry about providing temporal things for himself does not distract him from providing others with eternal things" (*In Evangelia homiliae*, 17). Apostolate calls for generous self-surrender which leads to detachment; therefore, Peter, following our Lord's commandment, when the beggar at the Beautiful Gate asked him for alms (Acts 3:23), said, "I have no silver or gold" (*ibid.*, 3:6), not so as to glory in his poverty", St Ambrose points out, "but to obey the Lord's command. It is as if he was saying, 'You see in me a disciple of Christ, and you ask me for gold? He gave us something much more valuable than gold, the power to act in his name. I do not have what Christ did not give me, but I do have what he did give me: In the name of Jesus Christ, arise and walk' (cf. Acts 3:6)" (*Expositio Evangelii sec. Lucam, in loc.*). Apostolate, therefore, demands detachment from material things and it also requires us to be always available, for there is urgency about apostolic work.

"And salute no one on the road": "How can it be", St Ambrose asks himself, "that the Lord wishes to get rid of a custom so full of kindness? Notice, however, that he does not just say, 'Do not salute anyone', but adds, 'on the road.' And there is a reason for this.

"He also commanded Elisha not to salute anyone he met, when he sent him to lay his staff on the body of the dead child (2 Kings 4:29): he gave him this order so as to get him to do this task without delay and effect the raising of the child, and not waste time by stopping to talk to any passer-by he met. Therefore, there is no question of omitting the good manners to greet others; it is a matter of removing a possible obstacle in the way of service; when God commands, human considerations should be set aside, at least for the time being. To greet a person is a good thing, but it is better

to carry out a divine instruction which could easily be frustrated by a delay" (*ibid.*).

**6.** Everyone is "a son of peace" who is disposed to accept the teaching of the Gospel which brings with it God's peace. Jesus' recommendation to his disciples to proclaim peace should be a constant feature of all the apostolic action of Christians: "Christian apostolate is not a political program or a cultural alternative. It implies the spreading of good, 'infecting' others with a desire to love, sowing peace and joy" (Bl. J. Escriva, *Christ is passing by*, 124).

Feeling peace in our soul and in our surroundings is an unmistakable sign that God is with us and a fruit of the Holy Spirit (cf. Gal 5:22): "Get rid of these scruples that deprive you of peace. What takes away your peace of soul cannot come from God. When God comes to you, you will feel the truth of those greetings: My peace I give to you. ..., peace I leave you..., peace be with you..., and you will feel it even in the midst of troubles" (Bl. J. Escriva, *The Way*, 258).

**7.** Our Lord clearly considered poverty and detachment a key feature in an apostle (vv. 3-4). But he was aware of his disciples' material needs and therefore stated the principle that apostolic ministry deserves its recompense. Vatican Council II reminds us that we all have an obligation to contribute to the sustenance of those who generously devote themselves to the service of the Church: "Completely devoted as they are to the service of God in the fulfillment of the office entrusted to them, priests are entitled to receive a just remuneration. For 'the laborer deserves its wages' (Lk 10:7), and 'the Lord commanded that they who proclaim the gospel should get their living by the gospel' (1 Cor9:14). For this reason, in so far as provision is not made from some other source for the just remuneration of priests, the faithful are bound by a real obligation of seeing to it that the necessary provision for a decent and fitting livelihood for the priests is available" (Vatican II, *Presbyterorum ordinis*, 20).

**20.** Our Lord corrects his disciples, making them see that the right reason for rejoicing lies in hope of reaching heaven, not in the power to do miracles which he gave them for their mission. As he said on another occasion, "On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you evildoers'" (Mt 7:22-

23). In other words, in the eyes of God doing his holy will at all times is more important than working machines.

## **Gospel Reflection**

Birthdays are always times to celebrate life, to reminisce about growing up, to take stock of where we are and where we want to go. These kinds of reflections are a bit more difficult to do as a nation, but the Fourth of July does help us to pause and be grateful for all that we have as a country founded on principles of equality and freedom. Truly, we have had an abundant harvest as a nation: supermarkets stacked to the ceiling with food; freedom of speech, press, assembly; blessings of resources, talents and strengths. At the same time we are well aware that not everyone shares equally in all its abundance—we still face appalling poverty, ghastly prejudices and gross abuse of power. Our abundance or lack of it is measured by such things as wealth, power, peace, poverty, oppression and discord. The gospel doesn't talk about a country but about a "kingdom." This kingdom is of God and, though a very different from our country, it is just as "at hand."

In this Sunday's gospel Jesus refers three times to an abundant harvest. The nature of this harvest is evident through the ministry of the disciples Jesus sends forth; peace, stability, nourishment, healing and rejoicing. This is no ordinary harvest of the fruits of the earth. This harvest is the fruit of God's kingdom "at hand" through the very ministry of Jesus and his disciples. Moreover, the harvest is being reaped today through us who continue to go forth in Jesus' name.

Note that some of the abundant harvest goes to the laborer—disciples who are sent forth: they have the power to heal, are nourished, are welcomed, cast out demons and rejoice. Some of the abundant harvest goes to those who receive the ministry; peace and healing. The abundant harvest of both laborers and recipients is a sign of God's presence. And where God is present, there is God's kingdom. Rather than being measured by spacious skies, prairies of ripe wheat, majestic mountains, sobering deserts, rivers and lakes replete with commerce, God's kingdom is measured by the abundance of goodness, care for others and growth toward new life.

## **Living the Paschal Mystery**

In our times we are not as conscious of personified evil as in the time of Jesus. Demons represent a world view; God's kingdom breaks in on this evil and establishes a new world record in which evil's grasp is broken. The establishment of God's reign is already an in-breaking of the final glory that will be ours—our "names are [already] written in heaven." References to the abundance of the end times are captured in the "harvest" metaphor Jesus uses. Jesus looks at the harvest and sees abundance and fulfillment. Some of this abundance and fulfillment is surely realized when we take up Jesus' mission to bring peace, healing and dispel evil. The challenge of this gospel is that we don't get so lost in doing Jesus' mission that we forget that being faithful disciples is in itself already an in-breaking of God's reign. It is in Christ's presence through us that peace and joy are spread.

Living the paschal mystery means believing in what God has made us—members of his Body sent forth to be God's presence. It means that we are as satisfied with the presence we bring as we are with the good that we can do. Mission is being sent to *be* Christ for others. Only when we act out of our identity can anything we do help establish God's reign.

## **New and Old Testament links**

### **First Reading — Isaiah 66: 10-14**

<sup>10</sup> Hear what Yahweh says, you rulers of Sodom; listen to what our God teaches, you people of Gomorrah <sup>11</sup> 'What are your endless sacrifices to me?' says Yahweh. 'I am sick of burnt offerings of rams and the fat of calves. I take no pleasure in the blood of bulls and lambs and goats <sup>12</sup> When you come and present yourselves before me, who has asked you to trample through my courts? <sup>13</sup> Bring no more futile cereal offerings; the smoke from them fills me with disgust. New Moons, Sabbaths, assemblies -- I cannot endure solemnity combined with guilt. <sup>14</sup> Your New Moons and your meetings I utterly detest; to me they are a burden I am tired of bearing.

### **Responsorial Reading — Psalm 66:1-3, 4-5, 6-7, 16, 20**

<sup>1</sup> [For the choirmaster Song Psalm] Acclaim God, all the earth, <sup>2</sup> sing psalms to the glory of his name, glorify him with your praises, <sup>3</sup> say to God, 'How awesome you are! 'Your achievements are the measure of your power, your enemies woo your favour, <sup>4</sup> all the earth bows down before you, sings psalms to you, sings psalms to your name. 'Pause <sup>5</sup> Come and see the marvels of God, his awesome deeds for the children of Adam: <sup>6</sup> he changed the sea into dry land, they crossed the river on foot. So let us rejoice in him, <sup>7</sup> who rules for ever by his power; his eyes keep watch on the nations to forestall rebellion against him. Pause <sup>16</sup> Come and listen, all who fear God, while I tell what he has done for me. <sup>20</sup> Blessed be God who has not turned away my prayer, nor his own faithful love from me.

### **Second Reading — Galatians 6: 14-18**

<sup>14</sup> But as for me, it is out of the question that I should boast at all, except of the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. <sup>15</sup> It is not being circumcised or uncircumcised that matters; but what matters is a new creation. <sup>16</sup> Peace and mercy to all who follow this as their rule and to the Israel of God <sup>17</sup> After this let no one trouble me; I carry branded on my body the marks of Jesus. <sup>18</sup> The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, my brothers. Amen.

### **Catechism of the Catholic Church**

**787.** From the beginning, Jesus associated his disciples with his own life, revealed the mystery of the Kingdom to them, and gave them a share in his mission, joy, and sufferings. (Cf. *Mk* 1:16-20; 3:13-19; *Mt* 13:10-17; *Lk* 10:17-20; 22:28-30.) Jesus spoke of a still more intimate communion between him and those who would follow him: "Abide in me, and I in you. . . . I am the vine, you are the branches." (*Jn* 15:4-5.) And he proclaimed a mysterious and real communion between his own body and ours: "He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him." (*Jn* 6:56.)

**2611.** The prayer of faith consists not only in saying "Lord, Lord," but in disposing the heart to do the will of the Father. (Cf. *Mt* 7:21.) Jesus calls his disciples to bring into their prayer this concern for cooperating with the divine plan. (Cf. *Mt* 9:38; *Lk* 10:2; *Jn* 4:34.)

## **Sharing and Discussion**

1. How To what extent have you recognized the appointment or calling of God to participate in evangelization?
2. What joys and/or fears do you have about sharing Christ with others who are not yet believers?
3. How do you think someone recognizes that the Kingdom of God has come near them?

## **Closing Prayer**

**All:** God of abundance, you give us all good things in order that your kingdom may be firmly established: hear these prayers that one day we might share in your everlasting kingdom of heaven. We pray through Christ our Lord. Amen.

**Leader:** May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil and bring us to everlasting life.

**All:** Amen

**Saturday 10am - 12pm at Church of The Holy Cross (room #03-06)**

**\*\*\* No session on 3<sup>rd</sup> July, 2010 \*\*\***

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