

14th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C

GOSPEL

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The Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them out ahead of him, in pairs, to all the towns and places he himself was to visit. He said to them, "The harvest is rich but the labourers are few, so ask the Lord of the harvest to send labourers to his harvest. Start off now, but remember, I am sending you out like lambs among wolves. Carry no purse, no haversack, no sandals. Salute no one on the road.

"Whatever house you go into, let your first words be, "Peace to this house!" And if a man of peace lives there, your peace will go and rest on him; if not, it will come back to you. Stay in the same house, taking what food and drink they have to offer, for the labourer deserves his wages; do not move from house to house.

"Whenever you go into a town where they make you welcome, eat what is set before you. Cure those in it who are sick, and say, "The kingdom of God is very near to you." But whenever you enter a town and they do not make you welcome, go out into its streets and say, "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." I tell you, on that day it will not go as hard with Sodom as with that town.'

The seventy-two came back rejoicing. 'Lord,' they said 'even the devils submit to us when we use your name.' He said to them, 'I watched Satan fall like lightning from heaven. Yes, I have given you power to tread underfoot serpents and scorpions and the whole strength of the enemy; nothing shall ever hurt you. Yet do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you; rejoice rather that your names are written in heaven.'

(Luke 10:1-12, 17-20)

DID YOU KNOW?

Points of interest and Catholic lore

- The image of the vineyard is often used in the Old Testament as an image of God's people. They must be tended to and cultivated well so that the harvest is a rich one.
- The Church has always understood its main function to be one of announcing the Gospel to others. This is the mission of the Church, and the work is carried out by missionaries.
- All baptised people are called to be a part of this missionary activity of the Church.

EXPLORING THE WORD

At the very end of Luke's Gospel, Jesus' final instruction to the disciples is to proclaim the Good News to all the nations (Luke 24:47). In today's text, it is almost as if Jesus is throwing them into the deep end! They are sent out on their first missionary assignment as raw recruits, with little to help them, but the lessons they learn here will be greatly needed later. Whatever they seek to achieve in Jesus' name, they are given the assistance they need. Jesus, however, reminds them that the crucial factor is not that they are powerful or that they are successful. What really matters is that they are doing the will of God, in Jesus' name, and this is the reason for their ultimate salvation.

- Explore ways in which the catechumens are like the disciples in this story: not yet fully formed but willing to undertake the mission. What lessons are they learning?
- Do they feel as if they are lambs among wolves? Explore this idea. In what ways in today's society is it 'dangerous' to be a Christian?

MAKING CONNECTIONS

Opportunities for group discussion and personal prayer

- How have you been received into the family of God's people?
- In what ways are you called to spread the Good News to others?
- At this early stage of the gospel, the disciples are hardly formed yet for the task they are given. Have you ever been given a job to do that set you on a 'steep learning curve'? How did you feel? What was your response? How well did you achieve your task? Share your stories with others.
- Offer the gift of hospitality to someone this week. Make them welcome and give something of 'the peace of Christ' to them. Reflect on how you yourself are enriched by this, as well as the recipient of your hospitality.
- Use the gospel acclamation as the basis of your prayer this week:

*May the peace of Christ reign in my heart
and may the fullness of his message live in me.*

