



# WEEKLY GOSPEL REFLECTION



14<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time, Cycle C

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*"...rejoice that your names are written in heaven."* Luke 10:20

All synoptic gospels record the sending of the Twelve during the lifetime of Jesus, but only today's gospel account from Luke records the mission of the seventy-two. Jewish tradition numbered the nations of the world at seventy-two. The mission of the Twelve symbolized the preaching of the gospel to Israel, and the mission of the seventy-two points to the preaching of the gospel to all nations, one of Luke's favorite themes. They are sent to preach Jesus' own message, the proclamation that the kingdom of God is at hand.

As always, the mission is marked by both detachment and urgency. The detachment necessary is reflected in the command not to take anything along, and the urgency is indicated by the prohibition against greeting anyone on the way.

Peace is a main theme of the mission. Saying that they are sent as lambs in the midst of wolves could be just a reminder that opposition is part of missionary work, but it could also recall the prophecy of Isaiah that the lamb will lie down with the wolf. *"Peace to this house"* is to be their greeting when they enter a house.

Wherever they go, they continue the mission of Jesus. They cure the sick and proclaim the kingdom of God. Even if they are not welcomed, they are to proclaim the kingdom anyway.

The disciples are not simply called to seek more "laborers" for the harvest. They are to pray for an increase in disciples who have the talents and charisms necessary to be good leaders. Pray for the future of the Church, passing on the gift of faith from generation to generation, in an unending chain until Jesus Christ comes again.

Also, implicitly, they need to pray for themselves. Prayer is the channel for staying in touch with the divine Father, the creator of all the goodness of the earth. Jesus knows that with this type of prayer the disciples will come to discernment of their vocation, the purpose for which they were conceived, their destiny. The Holy Spirit is the source of this illumination. Discernment of Spirits is the desired result.

When they return from the mission, they are exultant that the powers of evil were subject to them. Jesus expands on that thought and notes that he has given them this power over evil. Then he cautions them not to put so much emphasis on such wonders but to rejoice that their names are written in the book of life and that they have received the gift of salvation themselves.

In reflecting on this passage, consider that we are chosen to be children of light through adoption at our baptism. One might ponder the final statement of Jesus that reminds us of the ultimate gift, *"...rejoice that your names are written in heaven."*

**A reading from the holy gospel according to Luke.**

The Lord appointed seventy others and sent them on ahead of him in pairs to every town and place where he himself intended to go.

He said to them,

*"The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few;  
therefore ask the Lord of the harvest  
to send out laborers into his harvest.  
Go on your way.  
See, I am sending you out like lambs into the midst of wolves.  
Carry no purse, no bag, no sandals;  
and greet no one on the road.  
Whatever house you enter,  
first say, 'Peace to this house!'  
And if anyone is there who shares in peace,  
your peace will rest on that person;  
but if not, it will return to you.  
Remain in the same house,  
eating and drinking whatever they provide,  
for the laborer deserves to be paid.  
Do not move about from house to house.  
Whenever you enter a town and its people welcome you, eat what is set before you;  
cure the sick who are there, and say to them,  
'The kingdom of God has come near to you.'  
But whenever you enter a town and they do not welcome you,  
go out into its streets and say,  
'Even the dust of your town that clings to our feet,  
we wipe off in protest against you.  
Yet know this: the kingdom of God has come near.'  
I tell you,  
on that day it will be more tolerable for Sodom  
than for that town."*

The seventy returned with joy, saying,

*"Lord, in your name even the demons submit to us!"*

Jesus said to them,

*"I watched Satan fall from heaven like a flash of lightning.  
See, I have given you authority to tread on snakes and scorpions,  
and over all the power of the enemy;  
and nothing will hurt you.  
Nevertheless, do not rejoice at this,  
that the spirits submit to you,  
but rejoice that your names are written in heaven."*

**The Gospel of the Lord**