

July 6, 2025
14th Sunday in Ordinary Time
Luke 10:1-12, 17-20

At that time the Lord appointed seventy-two others whom he sent ahead of him in pairs to every town and place he intended to visit. He said to them, "The harvest is abundant but the laborers are few; so ask the master of the harvest to send out laborers for his harvest. Go on your way; behold, I am sending you like lambs among wolves. Carry no moneybag, no sack, no sandals; and greet no one along the way.

Into whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace to this household.' If a peaceful person lives there, your peace will rest on him; but if not, it will return to you. Stay in the same house and eat and drink what is offered to you, for the laborer deserves his payment. Do not move about from one house to another. Whatever town you enter and they welcome you, eat what is set before you, cure the sick in it and say to them, 'The Kingdom of God is at hand for you.'

Whatever town you enter and they do not receive you, go out into the streets and say, 'The dust of your town that clings to our feet, even that we shake off against you.' Yet know this; the kingdom of God is at hand. I tell you, it will be more tolerable for Sodom on that day than for that town."

The seventy-two returned rejoicing, and said, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us because of your name." Jesus said, "I have observed Satan fall like lightning from the sky. Behold, I have given you the power to 'tread upon serpents' and scorpions and upon the full force of the enemy and nothing will harm you. Nevertheless, do not rejoice because the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice because your names are written in heaven."

Background:

This is an unusual week in the cycle of Gospel texts. Last week we celebrated the Feast of Peter and Paul. That feast has its own readings and therefore the readings for the 13th week of Ordinary time were not used. If you have time you may like to read those readings in preparation for this Sunday's readings. (1 Kings 19:16b, 19-21, Galatians 5:1, 13-18, and Luke 9:51-62)

A significant line from last week's Gospel stated, "When the days for Jesus' being taken up were fulfilled, he resolutely determined to journey to Jerusalem, and he sent messengers ahead of him." (Luke 9:51) That Gospel focused on the hostile reception Jesus received when he entered a Samaritan village and then the violent suggestion of James and John. The second part of that Gospel addressed those who would be followers of Jesus who felt they needed to delay becoming followers so that they could "bury the dead."

Today's text is similar to Jesus' sending out the twelve in Mark 6:7-13 and Luke 9:1-6. Luke's is the only Gospel to include this account of Jesus sending out the 72 disciples. Seventy-two was believed to be the number of all the nations. It is also the number of elders Moses was instructed to choose from the people as they entered a covenant relationship with Yahweh (Exodus 24:1, Numbers 11:16). The number implies that this is God's message to go out to all the nations and not just to those towns that are on Jesus' route to Jerusalem. This is another hint that the journey that Jesus and his disciples are taking to Jerusalem should be seen as a spiritual journey.

They are being sent with a sense of urgency, and at the same time, gentleness. They are to go as lambs among wolves and yet without the protection of even a stick. They are to travel light, without sandals, money, or provisions. They are not even to stop to greet others along the way. If they or their message are rejected, they are not to protest or give argument, but simply to move on. However, even if they are not welcomed, they are to announce publicly that the Kingdom of God is at hand.

Travel was already dangerous, and not the ordinary experience of people of Jesus' day. Also, there were those who would take advantage of travelers. The disciple who travels without money, staff or sandals may have little

of value to attract those with evil intentions, but they are also very vulnerable. Jesus was asking a great deal of the disciples.

While Jesus' disciples were dependent upon the generosity of strangers, they were not powerless. Ancient Mediterranean people believed in a hierarchy of power that extended from God through all of creation, and it included many spirits. It is clear from the description of the rejoicing seventy-two that Jesus has shared with them his power over the spirit world. For a human to have some power over spirits was not totally usual. The problem the leaders of the Jews had with Jesus was not that he cast out spirits, but that they did not know by what power he did such things. The followers are to rejoice not in this unusual "overturning of the hierarchy of power," but to rejoice instead that their names are written in heaven.

Reflection Questions:

1. When you have traveled, how many of the things you brought did you actually use?
2. Do you think of yourself as a light traveler?
3. Can you imagine being among the 72 receiving Jesus' instruction for your missionary journey? What thoughts and feelings are going through you?
4. What would be the most challenging part of traveling as a missionary for even a couple of weeks?
5. What does the fact that seventy-two returned rejoicing say to you?
6. What does Jesus' response to their rejoicing say to you?
7. How are you, today at this point of your life, being sent?
8. Can you talk with God now about your experience of God sending you, how you see yourself as God's disciple in your present life, or some hope you have or have had?

The Gospel background and reflection questions are written by Fr. Paul Gallagher, OFM. They are edited by Sister Anne Marie Lom, OSF and Joe Thiel. The excerpts from the Sunday readings are prepared by Joe Thiel. To be added to the distribution list, send your name and email address to annemarie.lom@gmail.com

Our Gospel Reflections are hosted by the Franciscan Sisters of Christian Charity. Their homepage is <https://fscs-calledtobe.org/>. One link there is labeled Franciscan Gospel Reflections. A click on the icon will take you to the Gospel reflections for the upcoming Sunday. By following this link, you will be able to blog or comment on the reflection questions. The material will be posted on Fridays and will be available until the following Friday when the new material is posted.

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Excerpts from the readings for July 3, 2022, the Fourteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Thus says the Lord: Rejoice with Jerusalem and be glad because of her, all you who love her; exult, exult with her, all you who were mourning over her! Oh, that you may suck fully of the milk of her comfort, that you may nurse with delight at her abundant breasts! For thus says the Lord: Lo, I will spread prosperity over Jerusalem like a river, and the wealth of the nations like an overflowing torrent. As nurslings, you shall be carried in her arms, and fondled in her lap; as a mother comforts her child, so will I comfort you; in Jerusalem you shall find your comfort. When you see this, your heart shall rejoice and your bodies flourish like the grass; the Lord's power shall be known to his servants.

Let all the earth cry out to God with joy. Sing praise to the glory of his name; proclaim his glorious praise. "Let all on earth worship and sing praise to you, sing praise to your name!" Come and see the works of God, his tremendous deeds among the children of Adam. He has changed the sea into dry land; through the river they passed on foot; let us rejoice in him. He rules by his might forever. Hear now, all you who fear God, while I declare what he has done for me. Blessed be God who refused me not my prayer or his kindness!

Brothers and sisters: May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the World has been crucified to me, and I to the world. For neither does circumcision mean anything, nor does uncircumcision, but only a new creation. Peace and mercy be to all who follow this rule. From now on, let no one make troubles for me; for I bear the marks of Jesus on my body. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brothers and sisters. Amen.

At that time the Lord appointed seventy-two others whom he sent ahead of him in pairs to every town and place he intended to visit. He said to them, "The harvest is abundant but the laborers are few; so ask the master of the harvest to send out laborers for his harvest. Go on your way; behold, I am sending you like lambs among wolves. Carry no money bag, no sack, no sandals; and greet no one along the way. Into whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace to this household.' If a peaceful person lives there, your peace will rest on him; but if not, it will return to you. Stay in the same house and eat and drink what is offered to you, for the laborer deserves his payment. Do not move about from one house to another. Whatever town you enter and they welcome you, eat what is set before you, cure the sick in it and say to them, 'The kingdom of God is at hand for you.' Whatever town you enter and they do not receive you, go out into the streets and say, 'The dust of your town that clings to our feet we shake off against you.' Yet know this: the kingdom of God is at hand. I tell you, it will be more tolerable for Sodom on that day than for that town." The seventy-two returned rejoicing, and said, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us because of your name." Jesus said, "I have observed Satan fall like lightning from the sky. Behold, I have given you the power to 'tread upon serpents' and scorpions and upon the full force of the enemy and nothing will harm you. Nevertheless, do not rejoice because the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice because your names are written in heaven."

Excerpts from Isaiah 66:10-14; Psalm 66:1-7, 16, 20; Galatians 6:14-18; and Luke 10:1-12, 17-20

Friends,

Here are the Gospel background and reflection questions for July 6th, as prepared by Franciscan spiritual director Fr. Paul Gallagher. The Gospel from Luke has the story of Jesus sending 72 disciples ahead of him in pairs to every town and place he intended to visit. "Wherever they welcome you, cure the sick in it and say to them, 'The kingdom of God is at hand for you.'" They return rejoicing, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us because of your name." He replies, "Rejoice because your names are written in heaven."

The other readings also have references to places of God's presence, works of God, and rejoicing in them. In the first reading from Isaiah, thus says the Lord, "Rejoice with Jerusalem and be glad because of her. I will spread prosperity over her, and in her you shall find your comfort." Psalm 66 proclaims, "Let all the earth cry out to God with joy. Come and see the works of God, who rules forever; he refused me not my prayer or his kindness!" In the second reading, from the letter to the Galatians, Paul writes, "May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the only thing that means anything is a new creation."

It is after a long stretch of the Lent and Easter seasons, and, at the end and beyond the end of that, five Sundays in a row celebrating one feast or another, that we now finally return to Ordinary time on the liturgical calendar. And where we pick up, as we are reminded in the readings, is cause for rejoicing. Isaiah says, "Rejoice in the return to Jerusalem and be comforted—your heart shall rejoice, and the Lord's power shall be known." In the Psalm, "He changed the sea into dry land; proclaim how tremendous are his deeds!" From Paul, "Boast in the cross through which we have a new creation." And then we have the 36 pairs of disciples in the Gospel, for whom the harvest is abundant. Sent "like lambs among wolves," they are instructed to greet the households with

peace, eat what is set before them, cure the sick, and announce, 'The kingdom of God is at hand.' Upon their return, there is much to rejoice over. The demons are subject to them because of his name. But he has more: "I have observed Satan fall like lightning from the sky. Behold, I have given you the power to tread upon the full force of the enemy and nothing will harm you. But rejoice because your names are written in heaven."

Joe

> i < May the Word light your way each day!