

# Scripture Study

Fourteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time – Cycle C



## **Opening prayer**

Isaiah 66:10-14c

(Ps 66:1-7,16,20)

Galatians 6:14-18

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

## *Overview of the Gospel:*

- This Sunday's Gospel reading finds Jesus and his disciples still on their way to Jerusalem. As he makes his way, he sends his disciples ahead of him to the towns he will pass through to prepare them for his coming.
- This sending of the 70 recalls the selection by Moses of seventy elders (Numbers 11:24-25) and the governing council of the Jews of Jesus' time, the seventy Sanhedrin. They also may have represented the seventy known nations of the earth (Genesis 10:2-31).
- Jesus likens those who are to be reached with the Gospel as fields "white for harvest" (see John 4:35; Isaiah 27:12-13), and his disciples to the harvesters. They are to go forth dependent entirely on God and single-minded in their purpose. He has harsh words (verses 13-16, omitted in this reading) for towns that spurn his message.
- At the end of their mission they "return rejoicing" at their apparent power over Satan's demons. Jesus, however, reminds them that they have an even greater reason for rejoicing.

## *Questions:*

- Why does Jesus send the disciples out in pairs? What are they looking for (verse 2)?
- How is the Christian disciple like a "laborer for his harvest"? A "lamb among wolves"? What was the purpose of traveling light (verse 4)? Of praying first, going later (verse 2)? What kind of houseguests are the disciples to be (verse 5)? Why?
- How are they to relate to the towns they visit (verses 6-12)? What is their message?
- How do verses 1-12 show the urgency Jesus himself senses for evangelism? What is the reason for this urgency? What do you know about Sodom (Genesis 19:24-28)?
- The First Reading (Isaiah 66:10-14) talks about the joy of the exiled upon returning to a restored and richly abundant Jerusalem. Applying this to the Kingdom of God, the New Jerusalem, what should we be looking forward to and rejoicing in?
- What does Jesus mean when he says he "observed Satan falling like lightning from the sky"? (see Luke 11:14-23. Also Revelation 12:9 and Isaiah 14:12)
- When have you felt like a lamb among wolves? What did you learn from the experience?
- How do you feel about the harvest where you live? What would it take for you to become more involved in the harvest?

**Catechism of the Catholic Church: §§ 764-5, 787, 2122, 2611**

## **Closing Prayer**

*No sacrifice is more acceptable to God than zeal for souls.* -St. Gregory the Great

**Remember to read and meditate on the daily Mass readings!**

# "The harvest is plentiful... Pray the Lord to send out laborers into his harvest"

**Scripture:** *Luke 10:1-12, 17-20*

**Meditation:** What kind of harvest does the Lord want us to reap today? Luke the Evangelist dedicated his life to telling others of the good news of Jesus Christ. Luke's account in his Gospel and in the Acts of the Apostles emphasizes the mission of Jesus to bring the kingdom of God to every corner of the world. When Jesus commissioned seventy of his disciples to go on mission, he gave them a vision of a great harvest for the kingdom of God. Jesus frequently used the image of a harvest to convey the coming of God's reign on earth. The harvest is the fruition of labor and growth – beginning with the sowing of seeds, then growth, and finally fruit for the harvest. In like manner, the word of God is sown in the hearts of receptive men and women who hear his word and who accept it with trust and obedience. The harvest Jesus had in mind was not only the people of Israel, but all the peoples (or nations) of the world. John the Evangelist tells us that *"God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life"* (John 3:16).

What does Jesus mean when he says his disciples must be *"lambs in the midst of wolves"*? The prophet Isaiah foretold a time when wolves and lambs will dwell in peace (Isaiah 11:6 and 65:25). This certainly refers to the second coming of Christ when all will be united under the Lordship of Jesus after he has put down his enemies and established the reign of God over the heavens and the earth. In the meantime, the disciples must expect opposition and persecution from those who would oppose the gospel. Jesus came as our sacrificial lamb to atone for the sin



of the world. We, in turn, must be willing to sacrifice our lives in humble service of our Lord and Master.

What is the significance of Jesus appointing seventy disciples to the ministry of the word? Seventy was a significant number in biblical times. Moses chose seventy elders to help him in the task of leading the people through the wilderness. The Jewish Sanhedrin, the governing council for the nation of Israel, was composed of seventy members. In Jesus' times seventy was held to be the number of nations throughout the world. Jesus commissioned the seventy to a two-fold task: to speak in his name and to act with his power. Jesus gave them instructions for how they were to carry out their ministry. They must go and serve as people without guile, full of charity and peace, and simplicity. They must give their full attention to the proclamation of God's kingdom and not be diverted by other lesser things. They must travel light – only take what was essential and leave behind whatever would distract them – in order to concentrate on the task of speaking the word of the God. They must do their work, not for what they can get out of it, but for what they can give freely to others, without expecting reward or payment. "Poverty of spirit" frees us from greed and preoccupation with possessions and makes ample room for God's provision. The Lord wants his

disciples to be dependent on him and not on themselves.

Jesus ends his instructions with a warning: If people reject God's invitation and refuse his word, then they bring condemnation on themselves. When God gives us his word there comes with it the great responsibility to respond. Indifference will not do. We are either for or against God in how we respond to his word. God gives us his word that we may have abundant life in him. He wills to work through and in each of us for his glory. God shares his word with us and he commissions us to speak it boldly and simply to others. Do you witness the truth and joy of the gospel by word and example to those around you?

Why does Jesus tell his disciples to not take joy in their own successes, even spiritual ones? Jesus makes clear that the true source of our joy is God, and God alone. Regardless of the circumstances, in good times and bad times, in success or loss, God always assures us of victory in Jesus Christ. Jesus assures his disciples that he has all power over evil, including the power of Satan and the evil spirits or fallen angels who conspire against us. In fact, that is why Jesus came into the world to overthrow the evil one (John 12:31). We, too, as disciples of Jesus have been given spiritual authority and power for overcoming the works of darkness and evil (1 John 2:13-14).

*"Lord Jesus, may the joy and truth of the gospel transform my life that I may witness it to those around me. Grant that I may spread your truth and your light wherever I go."*

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