

14th Sunday of the Year 2022

Thoughts of holiday air travel this summer are already causing concern over lack of staff and threatened industrial action, all of which adds to the anxieties facing those going away. When we are travelling most of us make fairly extensive plans, because we don't want to be taken unawares. If abroad we make sure we have a valid passport, tickets, credit card, some local currency, change of clothes, mobile phone, i-pad etc. How different is the gospel passage we have just heard.

It is some considerable time since we were last with Luke in ordinary time, February 27th to be precise, and because of the recent solemnities we have missed a few of the Sunday readings, Jesus sending out the 12 for their first taste of pastoral ministry, and, last Sunday Jesus resolutely setting out for Jerusalem where he will suffer and die, but also experience the resurrection. Today we have the sending out of the 72 in pairs to places Jesus himself will visit in the future. Rather than taking things for the journey, they are to travel light and not to indulge in small talk on the way.

Jesus knows that his own time is short and that he will need help from others if he is going to establish the kingdom of God on earth. Their first words are to be words of peace which some will accept and others reject. When they are accepted they are to cure those who are sick and to announce that the kingdom of God is very near. When they are rejected they are to leave and do so in style by wiping the dust off their shoes and repeating, the kingdom of God is very near – this time as a warning.

This is followed by the return of the rejoicing 72 delighted with what they have achieved, and in danger of putting this down to themselves. So Jesus tells them to rejoice because their names are written in heaven.

This passage reminds us that for the kingdom of God to flourish and grow all of us are involved in one way or another. None of us are the finished article, we all have our strengths and weaknesses and we have much to learn along the way. It also reminds us not to rely on ourselves but on the Holy Spirit who will guide us. Some people will accept what we have to say and others will reject, or perhaps, simply ignore us.

At the heart of our message is the peace that Christ offers to those prepared to listen, a peace, he says in another place, the world cannot give. How the people of Ukraine must yearn for that peace today. Pope Paul VI wrote many years ago that "People listen more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if they do listen to teachers then it is because they are witnesses." In other words actions speak louder than words. Putting love into action, making "the wider we" a reality, is far more effective than empty promises. Finally Jesus tells the 72 and us that we are not to rejoice because some have accepted what we have had to say, that might tempt us to pride, but rather to rejoice in the graciousness of God who knows each one of us by name, and loves each one of us uniquely, unconditionally and eternally, writing our names in heaven.

Bidding Prayers for the 14th Sunday

Celebrant:

Cry out with joy to God all the earth, O sing to the glory of his name. With these words of today's psalm in our minds and hearts we turn to God in prayer.

Reader:

For the Church – that it will encourage all its members to be missionary disciples as we take the Word of God to others.

Lord in your mercy

For the leaders of our world – that they will do all they can to bring about an end to violence and war by negotiating peace based on justice for all.

Lord in your mercy

For all those for whom each day brings hunger and thirst – that there will be a fairer distribution of the world's plentiful resources so that all people may have sufficient on which to live.

Lord in your mercy

For those who carry the heavy cross of sickness and pain and for all those in hospital – that they may know the healing presence of Christ and the love and support of those who care for them.

Lord in your mercy

For those who have died, all victims of violence, accident, natural disaster and the Covid 19 pandemic, for John Whitehead, Peter and Stella's son in law who died suddenly, and Terry Whalley, Gerard Whalley, Gary Lynam, Sandra Muldoon, Paddy McDermott and Winifred O'Gara whose anniversaries occur this week – that they and all who have died may rest in peace and rise in glory.

Lord in your mercy

Either aloud or in silence we pray for our own special intentions...pause...then

Lord in your mercy

We ask the prayers of Mary as we say, Hail Mary...

Celebrant:

Lord God, when our world lay in ruins you raised it up again on the foundation of your Son's passion and death; give us the grace to rejoice in the freedom from sin that this has gained for us, and bring us to everlasting life. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen