

Connecting with the Sunday Readings

Fourteenth Sunday of Ordinary Time **Gospel Word**
 Luke 10:1–12,
 17–20

We are about two thousand years removed from the earthly life of Jesus. The Gospels connect us with Jesus, but there is much more. That “much more” is most likely why we are among his followers today. We receive Jesus, and all that he is about from others, literally thousands of others. One way to appreciate this passing on of Christian faith (our faith) is to imagine what Jesus was thinking as his life on earth was drawing to a close.

For the most part, the area he traveled was smaller than the size of New Jersey. When a few listeners gathered, he spoke to them. He did many rather remarkable deeds, but the eyewitnesses were few. His reputation as a good man, a rather remarkable man who might be the Messiah, spread locally, but there was no indication that he attracted that many followers. Toward the end of his life, when he suffered the death of a criminal, there were only three people at his side. And even after he rose from the dead, the numbers who saw him were small. Still, he had a plan for spreading his Good News and we read about how that began in today’s Gospel reading. And so he sent seventy-two followers—a small number to spread the good word about the reign of God. It is here.

So they went, most likely, a motley bunch. They were to travel two by two and depend for sustenance on the generosity of those they visited. Their message was about peace. If their message was unwelcomed or ignored, they were to return to the road and move on. Offer what you have and what you believe. If others accept it, good for all of you. If they don’t (for whatever reason), don’t take it personally. You’re not totally in charge. In fact, none of us ever are.

Living the Word

In addition to accepting hospitality, the disciples were also sent to heal the sick. In short, like the twelve Apostles sent out earlier (Luke 9:1–6), they were to do what Jesus did: share table fellowship with others, even sinners, and perform the signs that gave evidence about the nearness of the Kingdom of God. We stand in a long line of people who have done that. Think back to your own roots, the very beginnings of your lineage. Someone somewhere heard the proclamation of the Good News and it carried through generations to you.

Some of today’s missionaries travel to distant lands to proclaim the word of God. Some missionaries do it across the breakfast table or in an office or a taxicab. The pattern for proclaiming the Kingdom of God with others was the same then as it is now. Do what Jesus did: share table fellowship with others, even sinners, and perform the signs that gave evidence about the nearness of the Kingdom of God. You may think, “Well, I cannot perform miracles or heal people.” Maybe the signs and miracles of Jesus’ disciples today are subtler. Perhaps the offer of friendship or unconditional love heals a person. What about the times we participate in projects such as developing clean water for persons in underdeveloped countries; the times we teach an adult to read or a child to have self confidence; the times we advocate for better working conditions or health benefits for others? If you have been on the receiving end you might say “It is a miracle.”

One-line Prayer

Son of God, show us how to
 proclaim the Kingdom of God.
 Amen.