

Fourteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time



The darkness of our past blends with the joy of our recovery to give us all we need to share hope with our fellows still suffering. Witnessing others find freedom from the bondage of addictions, compulsions, and unhealthy attachments adds meaning and value to our lives. Recovery is a gift that can only be kept if we are willing to give it away. It can seem counterintuitive to consider how we might help others when we feel that we are desperately in need of help ourselves. As we are learning, service is an element of recovery that cannot be overlooked.

Discussions are often had about how the Church can grow and appeal to people currently not participating in the sacraments. We have found that sharing experience, strength, and hope with those who are willing to receive it is a very effective way to inspire change. We recognize that God has all the power and that service and evangelization happen according to His agenda.

This Sunday's Gospel reading tells the story of Jesus commissioning a large group of disciples who are to go out "like lambs among the wolves" and share the good news. Jesus tells the crowd, "The harvest is abundant but the laborers are few; so ask the master of the harvest to send out laborers for his harvest" (Luke 10:2). Jesus then directs the group (Luke 10:4-11):

*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."*

In a similar way, we maintain our recovery from addictions, compulsions, and attachments by sharing the hope of our spiritual awakening with others while practicing 12-step principles in all our affairs. We do not take it personally when someone is not ready to change, even when the person is a family member or close friend. Instead, we focus our time on those who might be willing now and await a moment where we can be most effective to another in the future.

At times, Christians have shifted away from the humble form of evangelization described by Jesus. His approach is consistent with that of Step Twelve, as we typically go out in pairs when tending to someone looking for help. We are sharing the good news of a *we* program and the joys of Christian fellowship. Even our aid to others should not be done in isolation.

Our message is a peaceful one, not one that points the finger or condemns the lost individual. We've been in their shoes and, if they are ready, our peace will rest upon them. As we may know, desperation is a state of mind that can lend itself to surrender and new life. Ask questions and listen rather than caving into the temptation to share everything you know.

This Sunday's Gospel reading concludes with Christ's laborers rejoicing in their harvest. We believe we can access the same wonderful power if we stay close to Jesus and seek His direction (Luke 10:17-20):

"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."

FYZW]cb Ei Yg]cbg

- Where might God be inviting you to share your recovery story or offer support to another?
- What fears do you have about being "sent out" to serve others, and how can you face them with God?
- In what ways can you stay rooted in humility and accountability as you carry the message of hope?

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First Reading: Isaiah 66:10-14c

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 66:1-3, 4-5, 6-7, 16, 20

Second Reading: Galatians 6:14-18

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