

PENTECOST 7 (14 ORDINARY SUNDAY) YEAR C 3 July 2016

READINGS: Isaiah 66:10-14, Galatians 6(1-6), 7 -16 Luke 10: 1 - 11, 16 - 20

Theme: *The Empowerment for Mission.*

"The harvest is plentiful, labourers are few, therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest.

In the name of the father and of the son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

My dear friends the above quotation are the words of Jesus regarding the need for the mission of the Church. Continuing, Jesus went on to give the code of conduct to the 70 or 72 as in the Septuagint. He goes on to give the code of conduct which is an essential ingredient for the spread of the word of God, a mission which is in our hands today.

On this Sunday, we look again at this mandate and meditate on the obstacles that militate against it. A review of the readings this morning might point us in the right direction.

The first reading from the Prophet Isaiah is part of a poem written after the return from the Babylonian exile. It paints a glowing picture of the blessings God will bestow on Jerusalem and its inhabitants. It likens Jerusalem to a mother who lovingly nurses her children. It foreshadows the blessings that will result from the coming of the kingdom of God with Jesus. Luke alone records the sending of the 72 disciples. This second sending out is explained by the size of the harvest, and the fact that time is short, and Jesus can't do it all by himself. It also foreshadows the preaching of the gospel to the whole world - which is a favourite saying of Luke. The mission of the disciples was an extension of Jesus' own mission. In understanding his instructions to them, we must remember that this was only a temporary mission, of short duration and limited to the surrounding Jewish towns and villages.

In the Epistle, Paul knowing the problems of any Christian community addresses mature Christians in Galatia. They are the people that have received the spirit and so they are no longer bound by the Mosaic laws. Freed from the obligations of the Mosaic laws, Christians now come under the law of Christ. The law of Christ is the law of love as Christians must bear the burdens of one another in a fraternal correction.

Paul applies the phrase the law of Christ to the central truth of the Gospel for which righteousness is given to those who live by faith. Faith becomes active in

love and love seeks to reclaim and set right the trespasses by taking into itself the burden of sin and guilt. This is the essence of the law of Christ.

He warns Christians about the dangers of pride and the obstacle it puts on the way. The Christian should not see the failings of another as an occasion for self congratulation.

If you must boast it must be in Christ.

In the Gospel, Jesus sets out clearly the codes of conduct both for the preacher and the hearer. Here, Jesus hits the nail in the head regarding the nature of missions and the causes of joys and sorrows. The number 70 or 72 is immaterial, the symbolism however it represented mission to the whole world.

In this mission, the Christians are not to be clustered up with material things. Both the preacher and the hearer must get rid of all those obstacles which lie on the way. It could be material goods it could be our attitude to life.

How often have we come to conclusion before we even here what is being said.

We must get rid of our self importance and concentrate on our mission as Christians in the world. Some of us are blinded by our wealth and some are by other accidents of history. These we must get rid if we are to be imitators of Christ.

In other words Christ is making it clear that single-minded and dedicated followers are needed for the building of his Kingdom. Half-hearted loyalty will not suffice.

This invitation to the disciples is extended to the church in every age and every place. The task of proclaiming the gospel belongs to all of us. As followers of Jesus we are called to make known the Christian message where ever we go because it is alive and relevant to every life. It is not the prerogative of the clergy. It is a task for all who are baptised. We have been given different talents by God that is why we must use whatever we have to proclaim the gospel. If we are to carry on the work Christ entrusted to us.

If we play our little role we would have responded to the call of our Lord Jesus who needs labourer for his harvest.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.