

14TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

By Al Mansfield

Isaiah 66:10-14

Psalm 66

Galatians 6:14-18

Luke 10:1-12, 17-20

WHAT BRINGS YOU JOY

There is an author who writes about de-cluttering your life and only keeping "what brings you joy." Today we are told what should bring us real joy from a spiritual perspective. The first reading tells us to "Rejoice with Jerusalem." The Responsorial, Psalm 66, is a great song of joy and praise to the Lord. St. Paul talks about boasting in the cross, that is, finding his joy in being crucified to the world. The gospel tells us that true joy is having our names "written in heaven."

ISAIAH

Our first reading is from the last chapter of the Book of Isaiah. It gives us a picture of Jerusalem as a mother of the new People of God. It is really a preview of heaven, the glorified Jerusalem, as a mother nursing her infants. This is a foretaste of the joy, delight, prosperity and comfort awaiting the children of God.

To all of this we respond, "Let all the earth cry out to God with joy."

GALATIANS

Our second reading is from the last chapter of Galatians. St. Paul gloried in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. He was faithful to the doctrine of the cross, that is, the cross of Jesus is all-satisfactory for our atonement and redemption. His teaching is that salvation doesn't come from the works of the law but through the faith in the cross of Jesus Christ.

GOSPEL

Our gospel today is the sending out of "others," perhaps to distinguish these from the Twelve. Some ancient texts give the number as 70, while other texts have 72. Jesus gives specific instructions about what to take with them on their journey (not much!) and what to do on the way (no frivolous greetings).

Their mission is to "cure the sick and say to them, 'the kingdom of God is at hand for you.'" The Lord promises to deal harshly with places that reject their ministry.

The return of these emissaries is interesting. They come back very elated that they had success in casting out demons in the name of Jesus. Jesus re-enforces their delegated authority over the enemy, but then gives them a "course correction" about what to rejoice over. "Nevertheless, do not rejoice because the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice because your names are written in heaven."

KEEPING A CORRECT PERSPECTIVE

It is understandable that the returning missionaries would be excited to be able to have command over demons. Success in spiritual ministry does indeed "bring us joy." But Jesus teaches us that God himself is our only true joy and life with him in heaven is the greatest joy there is - infinitely more than a de-cluttered house!