

Closing Prayer

Like a mother, O God,
you nurse the world with tender care,
and prepare it to receive your kingdom.
Bless all who labour in your harvest,
that they may rejoice to announce your peace
and not be afraid to declare
the coming of your judgement.
Let them rather rejoice in the hope
that their names are written in heaven.
This we ask through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Celebrating the Christian Year · Year C, Proper 9³

Lectionary-based Catechesis • Year C

Proper 9

Sunday between 3 and 9 July inclusive (OT 14)

Principal Service readings

Isaiah 66.10-14	Promise of the Lord to send peace to his servants
Psalms 66.1-8	Song of thanksgiving
Galatians 6.[1-6] 7-16	Sow in the Spirit to reap eternal life
Luke 10.1-11,16-20	Jesus sends out seventy-two disciples

Opening Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ,
speak to our hearts in the stillness,
keep us steadfast in the foundation that cannot be shaken,
lift up our eyes to behold the vision of your glory;
and perfect our faith, now and always. Amen.

Society of Saint Francis

Gospel Reading

Jesus sends out seventy-two disciples

¹The Lord appointed seventy others and sent them on ahead of him in pairs to every town and place where he himself intended to go. ²He said to them, 'The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest. ³Go on your way. See, I am sending you out like lambs into the midst of wolves. ⁴Carry no purse, no bag, no sandals; and greet no one on the road. ⁵Whatever house you enter, first say, "Peace to this house!" ⁶And if anyone is there who shares in peace, your peace will rest on that person; but if not, it will return to you. ⁷Remain in the same house, eating and drinking whatever they provide, for the labourer deserves to be paid. Do not move about from house to house. ⁸Whenever you enter a town and its people welcome you, eat what is set before you; ⁹cure the sick who are there, and say to them, "The kingdom of God has come near to you." ¹⁰But whenever you enter a town and they do not welcome you, go out into its streets and say, "Even the dust of your town that clings to our feet, we wipe off in protest against you. Yet know this: the kingdom of God has come near."

¹⁶'Whoever listens to you listens to me, and whoever rejects you rejects me, and whoever rejects me rejects the one who sent me.'

³ *Celebrating the Christian year : prayers and resources for Sundays, holy days and festivals, years A, B and C / compiled by Alan Griffiths. – 3 vols. – Norwich : Canterbury Press, 2004-5.*

¹⁷The seventy returned with joy, saying, 'Lord, in your name even the demons submit to us!' ¹⁸He said to them, 'I watched Satan fall from heaven like a flash of lightning. ¹⁹See, I have given you authority to tread on snakes and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy; and nothing will hurt you. ²⁰Nevertheless, do not rejoice at this, that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.'

Luke 10.1-11, 16-20 NRSV¹

Comments and Questions

Last week Jesus explained the rigours and demands of discipleship. Today he gives instructions to those who willingly agree to take up the cross and follow in his steps. Jesus proclaims a true missionary effort to reach the ends of the earth. This mission is not initiated by the church (the disciples), but by Jesus himself.

The manuscripts for 10.1 are evenly divided between 'seventy' and 'seventy-two', both here and in 10.17. Seventy seems reasonable, bearing in mind that Moses picked seventy elders (Numbers 11.16-17) to share his work with the people, and they shared the spirit of prophecy (Numbers 11.25).² Perhaps the word 'pairs' (Greek 'two-by-two') has influenced the text. The Twelve were sent to preach and heal without Jesus (9.1-2), whereas the messengers of 9.51 were sent to prepare hospitality for Jesus. The seventy are given both functions: they preach and heal, but in preparation for the arrival of Jesus. 'The harvest is rich' saying is present in Matthew 9.37-38, where it is given before the sending of the Twelve.

The main difference between the sending of the Twelve and of the Seventy is the greater focus on rejection for the Seventy – highlighted by the instruction to travel light (10.4). Why are they told to travel light? The hostility of the Samaritans was mentioned in 9.53. Here there is a greater sense of peace *not* resting on someone. Whether accepted or rejected, the message is the same: the kingdom of God has arrived!

The only power of the missionary is the peace of Jesus. Peace is the first post-resurrection gift that Jesus shares.

¹ New Revised Standard Version Bible is copyright © 1989 Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America.

² There is also an allusion to Numbers 11.26-30 in Luke 9.49.

Quotations

1

... left to ourselves we lapse into a kind of collusion with entropy, acquiescing in the general belief that things may be getting worse but that there's nothing much we can do about them. And we are wrong. Our task in the present ... is to live as resurrection people in between Easter and the final day, with our Christian life, corporate and individual, in both worship and mission, as a sign of the first and a foretaste of the second.

Surprised by hope: rethinking heaven, the resurrection, and the mission of the church
/ N. T. Wright. 2007

2

The spirit of Christ is the spirit of missions. The nearer we get to Him, the more intensely missionary we become.

Henry Martyn, 1781–1812

3

It is more important that you should know about the reverses than about the successes of the war. We shall have all eternity to celebrate the victories, but we have only the few hours before sunset in which to win them. We are not winning them as we should, because the fact of the reverses is so little realised, and the needed reinforcements are not forthcoming, as they would be in the position were thoroughly understood...So we have tried to tell you the truth the uninteresting, unromantic truth.

Amy Carmichael, 1867–1951

Related topics

For further study:

Evangelisation; Christian witness; faith and trust; service; Kingdom of God; community /assembly / church