

Fourteenth Sunday of Ordinary Time
Is. 66.10-14, Gal. 6.14-18, Lk. 10. 1-12,17-20

This weekend we are celebrating the birth of our Country. A country to which many volunteered to go to so they could practice their faith. The first Catholic Bishop was a man named John Carroll. Bishop Carroll was appointed Bishop 2 years after the revolutionary war. Bishop Carroll got to work immediately. His first direction was the education of men for vocations so as Bishop he created a college which he named after his best friend, the college is Georgetown (George Washington), the next year St. Johns, year three the University of Baltimore which is now the University of Maryland. In year four he created a college for women called St Mary's, to which he recruited and appointed Elizabeth Ann Seaton to run. The Catholic Church has always been strong in promoting education and health care. But it takes a lot of work and volunteers.

In today's Gospel St Luke tells us that Jesus "appointed seventy-two others whom he sent ahead of him in pairs." Jesus empowered these disciples to go out and share the Gospel that God's kingdom was at hand. These disciples followed Jesus and went off directly on their own at the direction of Jesus. Jesus gave the Disciples gifts to cure the sick and to proclaim the kingdom of God is at hand.

Jesus had picked "72 Disciples." The mission of the twelve apostles points to the regathering of the twelve tribes of Israel. The seventy-two points to the gathering of the 72 Gentile nations. Jesus is inviting the entire world to join the Kingdom of God.

Jesus is preparing Disciples to carry on His ministry. Jesus is beginning to lay the foundations of the Church. Jesus Himself went through the villages and communities proclaiming the Kingdom of God and curing the sick thus laying the Church's mission (Acts. 8.7,12).

Jesus says that the "harvest is abundant but the laborers are few; so ask the master of the harvest to send out laborers for his harvest." Jesus calls each of us to a vocation. Some may be called to the vocation of Holy Orders while some are called to the vocation of marriage. Yet we are all called to the vocation of evangelization to proclaim the Kingdom of God, that is the Gospel. We must note Jesus tells the Disciples that it won't be easy, "I am sending you like lambs among wolves." It takes courage to do things outside of your comfort zone.

Jesus needs followers who will devote their lives to spreading His message of joy, healing, and salvation. Each and everyone of us is called to participate in the

evangelical mission of the Church. During your prayer time have you asked God what he is calling you to do? Is he perhaps calling you to join the Altar Society, St Vincent de Paul, the Knights of Columbus, to be a Lector, Eucharistic Minister, or even an altar server? The CCC 2611 states, "The prayer of faith consists not only in saying 'Lord, Lord,' but in disposing the heart to do the will of the Father. Jesus calls his disciples to bring into their prayer this concern for cooperating with the divine plan." Remember part of prayer is listening.

Jesus tells the Seventy-two Disciples that "the Kingdom of God is at hand." The CCC explains "He calls his hearers to conversion and faith, but also to *watchfulness*. In prayer the disciple keeps watch, attentive to Him Who Is and Him Who comes, in memory of his first coming in the lowliness of the flesh, and in hope of his second coming in glory. In communion with their master, the disciples prayer is a battle; only by keeping watch in prayer can one avoid falling into temptation." The Catholic Faith is a way of life. It is not a simple way.

The harvest remains plentiful still today. They say there are approximately 35,000 denominations of Christians in the world today. But the largest group are those who have left the Catholic Church. So let us remember the mission of the "72", to proclaim the kingdom of God, to encourage the use of the sacraments for healing. To promote and recognize the real presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist.

As we celebrate the birth of the United States let us not forget our roots, our beginnings. Just as Jesus sent the 72, just as the first Bishop of the United States began to expand and develop education, let us also evangelize. In whatever way God is calling you Be Not Afraid to answer "I will." Let us gather the harvest for our Lord Jesus Christ, for His Kingdom. Let us begin by proclaiming the Gospel by the way we live. Let us say yes to our call whatever it may be. God has blessed each and everyone of us with gifts. Let us listen to the master and help Him with the harvest. Let us use our gifts for the betterment of the Church.

My friends as we celebrate all the sacrifices and courage made to have our freedoms here in the United States of America let us not ever forget the ultimate sacrifice which was made by Jesus Christ on the Cross so we may have eternal Life. Turn to the Sacraments frequently, today, tomorrow and forever. May we have the virtue of courage which is having moral strength in the face of danger or difficulty, especially in the face of anything that opposes our faith, Courage allows us to stand in our fears and do what is good, right, just, and noble. May we listen to God's calling and respond YES LORD! May we rise to the challenge and live our lives according to the Gospel.