

Are not two sparrows sold for a small coin?
 Yet not one of them falls to the ground without your Father's knowledge. Even all the hairs of your head are counted.
 So do not be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.

Matthew 10

Fourteenth Week of Ordinary Time: July 4-10, 2010

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Fourteenth Week of Ordinary Time

Sunday is the **Fourteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time**. We continue in **Luke's Gospel** with Jesus sending out the seventy-two "like lambs among wolves." Typical of Jesus' teachings, the sending reveals both the grace of being sent and a lesson of what to be thankful for. We are called not to be proud in our status as Christians, but joyous in our knowledge that we have a place in God's Kingdom.

The first readings this week are from the **Book of the Prophet Hosea**. Hosea was a prophet to the northern kingdom. He was powerful and tender in expressing God's relationship to Israel in terms he knew. His wife was unfaithful to him, yet he still loved her. On Saturday, we begin reading from the **Book of the Prophet Isaiah**, beginning with the call of Isaiah.

This week **Matthew's Gospel** shows us how Jesus calls his Apostles and how he sent them out on mission. We begin with Matthew's version of the story that was our Sunday gospel two Sundays ago, from Mark. Jesus heals an official's daughter, and along the way he heals the woman suffering hemorrhages. Jesus heals a mute man, but the Pharisees accuse him of using evil powers to do this. Jesus continues to heal. He tells his disciples to pray for even more disciples. Jesus selects twelve special disciples, his Apostles

Daily Prayer This Week

Last week we reflected about images of Jesus beginning his ministry and letting ourselves grow in admiration and attraction to him. This week we take the next step by watching him call and send his Apostles. As we go through each day this week, in the background of our consciousness, we can make an ongoing reflection on our call and mission.

For a few days, we can pray each morning, for just 30 seconds or so -- when we first stand up beside our bed or when we are in the shower or while dressing -- "Dear Lord, I sometimes forget that I am called by you to be your disciple. I forget that you call me each day to live the mission you give me. Help me be more aware of your call and more faithful in living it today."

For a few days, we might begin the day talking to our Lord, with our own words: "Lord, I have some challenges to face today. Help me enter those challenges with faith and trust in you. Calm my fears, heal my resistance to placing my trust in you. Then, let me bring your healing to the conflicts and wounds I encounter today."

And, for a few days, I can be more focused on what Jesus said about sending us like sheep among wolves. "Lord, there are so many ways that I have just become a part of the values of the world around me. Give me the freedom to hear your call today and to live it counter culturally. With your grace, I resolve to refuse to be mastered by sin today. And, I desire to live more simply and to try to hear the cry of the poor.

(those who are sent), and gives them the power to heal and to proclaim, "The Kingdom of heaven is at hand." They are sent to "Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, drive out demons." And they are not to charge for their ministry. They are to be discerning: "Behold, I am sending you like sheep in the midst of wolves; so be shrewd as serpents and simple as doves." He tells them that they will be persecuted, "but whoever endures to the end will be saved." Jesus tells them to not be afraid for God will protect them.

Sunday is the **Fifteenth Sunday of Ordinary Time**. In **Luke's gospel** we see Jesus challenged by a scholar who asks how to obtain eternal life. Jesus says "love your neighbor as yourself." When he is asked, "who is my neighbor?" Jesus tells the well-loved story of the Good Samaritan, who stopped to help a Levite who had been left for dead. Even though others had passed by the Levite, the Samaritan cares for him with tenderness. "Go and do likewise," Jesus tells us.

With your grace, I desire to be freed from the attachments that blind me, so that I might be guided by your Spirit in dismantling unjust social structures. Today, Lord, I place my trust in you."

In these simple prayers we find ourselves having a new focus each day. While continuing to be busy and doing what we are committed to doing, our days are transformed. In brief conversations with Jesus, our hearts and desires become more closely aligned with his. Practicing this kind of prayer is very fulfilling and soon becomes a habit. We become more reflective as we grow in intimacy with our Lord, in the midst of our daily lives.

As we review our day each evening before going to bed, we recognize God's presence with us that day. Expressing our gratitude each night claims the graces we have received and helps us trust God's presence with us more and more.

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