

Brothers and sisters, today's readings focus on Jesus sending his disciples. All the three Evangelists narrate how Jesus sent the twelve apostles, but Luke added that Jesus sent also seventy –[two] disciples ahead of him two – by - two to every town and place where he himself intended to go (Lk.10:1). The number '*seventy-two*' here, has a symbolic meaning. It refers to the seventy nations descended from Noah described in the Book of Genesis 10:1-32. It is also representing the number of the elders chosen by Moses with the task of leading and directing people in the wilderness. It may also be representing the number of the Sanhedrin - the supreme council of the Jews. Moreover, seventy was also the number of the nations in the world considered at the time of Jesus; finally, it represents all the baptized to evangelize the world around us.

Secondly, the Evangelist, Luke is trying to tell us that Jesus' mission to evangelize the whole world is not only for the Twelve Apostles, but also for every disciple of Christ. Jesus sends out his disciples '*two by two*' - in pairs, not as isolated individuals, but with a companion to share the journey with all its joys and sorrows. The number two also adds to the witness value, which required the testimony of two people. The disciples sent on the mission are called to be peace-bearers; that is their first message upon entering a house should be "Peace to this household" (Lk.10:5). **It is only love and peace that can turn enemies into friends.** The disciples have their mission for the kingdom carefully planned out for them by Jesus. It includes three -things: one, they have to establish a community, **a community of love and two, to heal those who are sick. Three, they are to announce that the kingdom of God is close at hand** (Luke 10:9).

Challenged by insecurity, the Disciples will be like lambs being sent out to work among wolves (Luke 10:3), a dangerous and difficult mission. On the other hand, there is seriousness and hardship about carrying out their mission. They are never to indulge in distractions, but they have to get on with their work. Jesus recommends to his disciples as they go on their mission, not to weigh themselves down with all kinds of bags and luggage. **Their security is not in material possessions, such as money and property.** His advice is that the missionaries, as they go to proclaim peace and to teach about the kingdom, they should take no walking staff, or a traveling bag or sandals, **but trust fully in the divine providence.**

The seventy-two went out and came back rejoicing at what they had accomplished in the name of Jesus. They discovered they could do the same things that Jesus was doing. **They could do the healing, drive away demons and even bring the dead to life.** Jesus shares their joy and says that they have indeed been given power through his name. But he tells them not to boast about the fruit of their work and reminds them – it is not the power, but the fact that their names are written in heaven, that they are destined for eternal life.

Similarly, Paul the apostle of the Gentiles concludes his letter to Galatians with a happy note. Paul never boasts of his many achievements, but the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ (Gal.6:14). Indeed, he bears "the brand marks of Jesus" in his body, a probable allusion to the many beatings he received as part of his apostolic ministry (see 2 Cor.11:23-27). For Paul, all that matters is that a person becomes a new creation, through faith in Jesus Christ. That is the purpose of evangelization, to have faith in Christ and to help others to come to faith in Christ.

Finally, my dear friends, God has called all the baptized Christians to be evangelists to transform the world. Parents are called to evangelize their children and children their parents. In a word, each member of the community is called to evangelize the other. Let us realize that we are citizens of God's kingdom; God's love brought us into it; our way of life will tell us whether or not we are loyal citizens. May God give us grace to do our best to keep the faith and help others to do the same so that all of us may inherit the kingdom. Amen!