

Fourteenth Sunday of Ordinary Time 2019

My beloved brothers and sisters, in the Gospel for today, Jesus sends out 72 of His disciples to proclaim and spread His mission in the Galilee. He gives them traveling instructions: to travel in pairs, carrying no provisions, depending completely upon the Divine Providence for all their needs; however, He also warns them that they may indeed experience rejection, but not to give into discouragement. These are the first priests. We know this, because this is the number of the men called by God to serve the people of God in the desert in the Sinai, assisting Moses in the distribution of the Holy Spirit that was given to Moses.

My beloved brothers and sisters, our culture today, in many ways, is relentlessly hostile to Christ and to His way of life. We are constantly being subjected to the scorn of the media and the culture around us. We experience outrageous attacks, resistance, mockery and humiliation. On top of this, we experience now the great humiliations of the unfolding of all of the scandals now present in the Church, although these happened many years ago; nonetheless, the wounds are still fresh and the scandals cause us much pain! Despite this, Jesus knew these things would occur; and, He wants us to be courageous ambassadors to the world around. Despite these great harms, nevertheless, the Church is continuing to attract new comers into the Church. Despite all of this bad news, Jesus is still calling young men to come and serve His people as priests. Jesus told us that we would be rejected, but we must remember, that this is the work of the Devil, who wants to rob Christ of souls. As long as the Gospel is preached, the Devil cannot win, and his time is now very short!

If we examine our lives, each of us knows that we have faced obstacles in our lives, despite these obstacles, these things can make us stronger and more resilient to the discouragements of life. The same is true of the proclamation of the Gospel. When we give into discouragement, the devil loves that, for if it is not resolved it will lead us into his despair. When we give into shame rather than hope, the devil loves this, for it leads us into despair. When we throw up our hands in discouragement, the devil loves this, because it leads us into paralysis, or

into a comfortable mediocrity that achieves nothing for Christ, in our lives or in the world!

We are called by Jesus to remember that when we encounter these things, we are no better than the Divine Master, who Himself experienced the rejection of the world, and even its hatred and revenge. Like Jesus, we are called to shake the dust from our feet, and keep going, and going and going, like Christian energizer bunnies! The next time you experience frustration or discouragement with your children or in your families, or in the work place, know, that Jesus is with you in a very special way- because it is His way- the way of the Cross!