

FR.TK REFLECTIONS 14th SUNDAY YEAR C 2022.
AMBASSADORS OF PEACE AND HEALING:

In the last few months since the Russians attacked Ukraine, there have been very disturbing pictures in the media especially on television and in the papers...destruction of cities, homes, hospitals, and worse still, people's lives. One can only imagine how long it will take the people of Ukraine to rebuild if and when it all settles. There will be so much bitterness, discouragement, disappointment, and depression when they return home. The most challenging part of rebuilding will be their **will (spirit).**

This is the set up of our first reading. After 50 years of exile the Israelites returned back to Jerusalem to find their city, homes, and country in ruins! They were discouraged and disappointed, about to give up, and God sent to them the great prophet, Isaiah. He gave them **comfort and courage. **Rejoice and be glad (Isaiah 66:10-11), I will send her peace and overflowing wealth (Isaiah 66:12).***

What great encouragement! When we feel **low in spirit, discouraged, and disappointed in life...when we feel all is over and we have hit the wall? *Courage!!***. Don't we need Isaiah for our time?

In the second reading to the Galatians St. Paul also gives encouragement not to **lose sight of the redeeming power of the cross and that we are to focus on the cross of CHRIST.**

The cross of Christ is the key and those who live in this rule receive **peace and mercy (Gal:6:16)**.

Can we really focus on the cross, bearing the wounds of the Lord, in exercising our missionary activities just like St. Paul?

The marks Paul had were real, inflicted by bearing witness to Christ...by **illness, hardship, flogging, stoning, and abuse**, we too will face all these... for many will **reject the gospel message**.

In the Gospel today, the Lord is calling us to be **participants in spreading the kingdom**. He is very much aware that the harvest is great to be accomplished by the apostles, hence he chose 72 unnamed others to go ahead of him. Their **names are not mentioned, where they came from is not mentioned, and where they went after this short temporary appointment is not mentioned either**. **Might this be us today?** Are we not called to go ahead of the Lord and prepare where He would come? How are you doing it yourself? **Jesus' problem is our problem and we must spread the kingdom where we are.**

The instructions given are ***loud and clear, Get going, no money, no sandals, no pauses, and no bags.*** Don't overload yourself, travel light, the call is **to have trust in God in what we are doing.** He is inviting us to be **detached from materialism so as to attach ourselves to Him. What we have must not be obstacles but channels to reach Him.** See what you have accumulated in your refrigerator, wardrobe, and garage. Do you actually need all that? *Can you give to someone who is in real*

need? Do you have a spirit of generosity? We are called today to simplify our lives and be focused on spiritual well being, friendship, family, and faith which makes life beautiful and worthy to live.

The mission of the 72 is of **peace and healing**. So is our mission in present day society and a world torn by **rivalry, division, materialism, hatred, and envy**. We are called to be **ambassadors of peace, healing, and justice... and to build bridges torn down by walls of hatred and selfishness.**

Christ is warning us that not all places will be welcoming, rejection and hatred will be present.

LET US BE BEARERS OF PEACE IN THE WORLD: St. Francis of Assisi says to you and me in black and white (just as true and powerful in this very moment as when the words were first written):

*Lord make us instruments of your peace in our world today,
Where there is hatred let us sow peace;
Where there is injury, pardon;
Where there is doubt, faith;
Where there is darkness, light;
And where there is sadness, joy.*

