

The Lord Jesus commissions his disciples to the places He is about to go, and He tells them to always say, "Peace to this house." We should notice that Jesus did not send His disciples to do some kind of catechesis or theological formation about faith. The disciples are to bring peace to any place they go, and if their offer of peace is rejected, they will leave with their peace intact. The disciples are to proclaim that the Kingdom of God is at hand. The disciples will not be silenced by those who reject their message, because their mission is to proclaim, not to control the response to their witness.

What does all of this have to do with us? We live in a very challenging context right now, in which many people live with fear, uncertainty, anxiety, poverty, suffering and distress. The disciples are ordinary people like you and me, who hear an extraordinary call of Christ to go before the Lord to proclaim God's Word to where Jesus is about to show up.

You and me are chosen disciples, sent by Jesus, to witness to everyone, and everywhere we go, that Jesus is on his way. And Jesus proclaims that, "Whoever listens to you listens to me. Whoever rejects you, Rejects me." It is so beautiful to see that these ordinary disciples who have no theological formation, no homiletical instruction are sent out to proclaim, to witness. And whoever listens to them, listens to Jesus. If an ordinary person accepts the call to become a disciple, a follower, even though limited and mortal, this person will speak for Jesus. And all the disciples may encounter rejection as Jesus did.

All of this is good news for us: We all have our limits as witnesses, we all are stumbling disciples, imperfect sinners, but we are to prepare the way for the arrival of Christ. And Jesus promises that if we accept the call to be missionaries of love, He will speak through us, and that whoever refuses to listen when we speak to them about Jesus, is actually refusing to listen to Jesus. This is an amazing promise. The proclamation of God's Word does not depend on our own efforts only: God will perform marvelous deeds through us and with us.

A Christian is anybody that Jesus commissions to go where He is about to go. You and I precede Christ. We are to proclaim to the world that God is coming. Now, what are we, chosen disciples, supposed to proclaim? Jesus gives us specific instructions. *"Cure the sick and say to them, the Kingdom of God is at hand."* In other words, we are to do and say, the same things that Jesus has been doing and saying in his ministry. When we perform acts of compassion or when we announce the advent of God's Kingdom by word and deed, we become living signs of God's Kingdom coming to us. We advance God's Kingdom, when we act with justice and love, with compassion and humility, with tenderness and forgiveness. Only after acting in these ways, we can say, "The Kingdom of God is at hand."

Dear brothers and sisters, the Gospel challenges us to anticipate the Kingdom of God, here and now. When we act as Jesus did, we not only pour on others, the healing love of God: we make way for Jesus' presence, we anticipate the coming of Jesus, the coming of God's Kingdom. God's Kingdom is not a future reality: It is already present within us; it is already happening in the world. You and I are the ones who are called to proclaim and anticipate, by word and deeds, God's Kingdom. We may have enough signs of evil in today's world. Many people feel unloved, unwanted, forgotten or hated. They believe that life ends in a dead end, that the injustice of the present moment is all there is, that

disappointment, death, and pain, have the last word. And Jesus responds to their cry by sending us to wherever a person is lonely, distressed, fearful or in pain, to open the way for Jesus before He gets there as well. What the world needs now, more than ever is **what** we are to bring within us: the loving and peaceful love, of Jesus Christ.

Universal Prayer  
Sunday 6th July 2025  
14th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Celebrant:

Sisters and brothers, St Paul's desire that peace and mercy be with us who follow Jesus, is our prayer also for the peoples of our world.

1. For our nation: that God will guide us in living the values which we proclaim so that all may experience life, liberty, and justice.  
We pray to the Lord.
2. For the acceptance of others: that God will help us to be open to the stranger and their gifts as they enter our lives so that we may be nurtured and enriched by them.  
We pray to the Lord.
3. May Pope Leo's appeal that hunger not be made a weapon of war, be heard across many nations in the Middle East, Africa and Asia, suffering because of this policy.  
We pray to the Lord.
4. May our prayer for the people into whatever homes we enter this week, be one which was given by Jesus to the seventy-two: Peace be to this house.  
We pray to the Lord.
5. May protection be given to all who live in unhappy and violent homes, so that free from hate and distrust, all will grow to their full potential with hope.  
We pray to the Lord.
6. May peace flow like a river across the Holy Land, through Ukraine and Russia, in Nigeria and Myanmar, so that all wars end, people are secure in safety and a future of hope opens up for children and adolescents with renewed strength.  
We pray to the Lord.
7. May all the victims of war rest in the Sacred Heart of Jesus, as we also remember all souls in purgatory.  
We pray to the Lord.

Celebrant:

Eternal God, our eyes are fixed on you that we may experience your mercy now and always. Through Christ our Lord.