

14th Sunday OT – Luke 10:1-12, 17-20

Mission of the 72

Luke is unique in recording a mission of the 72 in addition to a mission of the Twelve during the lifetime of Jesus. Possibly, he is reminding the reader of the 70 elders who assisted Moses when they were camped at the foot of Mount Sinai. Certainly, he is looking forward to pairs like Paul and Barnabas in Acts who worked for the gospel but who did not belong to the original Twelve. The harvest was too great to be reaped by such a small group. Legend has it that Luke himself was one of the 72.

Today's gospel begs us to talk about another Characteristic of Marianist Parish Ministry which send people on mission, which I will touch on later.

The condition for this mission were demanding. Their resources were minimal and their task urgent. It was dangerous too. They were like sheep among wolves. They were given no guarantee of success. Sometimes they would be welcomed, sometime not. *But their message was not their own.* Like Jesus, they were to preach the kingdom of God. They would learn that "through many tribulations, we must enter the kingdom of God." At the Last Supper, Jesus relaxed his prohibition of purse and bag for the journey. Now the mission was not confined to Palestine but was directed to the ends of the earth.

Despite all, their mission was successful and they returned full of joy. Correctly, they attributed their success not to their own efforts but to the name of Jesus. They reported to him. He knew that events on earth had repercussions in heaven. He reminded them that their task was not only against the powers of this world, but *against the powers of evil in high places.* Their earthly success had driven Satan's power from heaven and their labors for the gospel had ensured that their own names were written in the heavenly books. They should rejoice because they were citizens of the New Jerusalem in heaven.

Mission and Ministry is the last of the five characteristics of a Marianist Parish. ***The Marianist parish ministry sends people on mission.*** From the challenge of our founder, William Joseph Chaminade, that "You are all missionaries," Marianist parish ministry prepares people to be evangelizers of the Gospel. The first audience for the evangelizer is the family. Special

concern in Marianist parish ministry is given to opportunities for ***family faith formation***. Opportunities also are provided for community and sharing among often-neglected parish populations: young-married persons, young adults, persons choosing the single life and so forth.

In Marianist parish ministry people are educated to understand that there are two dynamics involved in community: ***gathering and being sent***. Being sent commissions the individual Catholic Christian to go beyond oneself to the family, the neglected of the parish, and even beyond parish boundaries. Marianist parish ministry creates opportunities for individuals and communities *to discern where and to whom* they are called to be witnesses for the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

The Society of Mary chooses to collaborate with the people of ***God in animating parish communities*** because Marianists recognize that a parish is a "community of communities of faith that has as its mission the mission of the Church itself: to announce Jesus Christ, to be a community that testifies to the presence of God and to be of service to all people." This dynamic of creating a "*community of communities of faith*" lies at the heart of the Marianist mission.

It was Mary who formed and nurtured the growth of Jesus. It was Mary who is heralded by the Church as the first disciple. And it is Mary who models faith for all humanity, and who continues to form and nurture people today for her son. It is the core of the Marianist mission to encourage participation in that ongoing Marian formation of the people of God. It is to the formation and multiplication of these Marian communities of faith and service that Marianist parish ministry is directed.

Marianist parish ministry is empowered by the faith formation, community formation, and spirituality that form its core. Marianist efforts to form in faith, to be Marian, to witness to the discipleship of equals, to send people on mission and to promote peace, justice, the integrity of creation and service, enhance the basic mission of the parish to announce the Good News of Jesus Christ. Marianist parish ministry calls its parishioners to participate fully in the life of the Church and to be bearers of the Good News to present and future generations. We will continue to mention the other characteristics of a Marianist Parish during these next months and eventually offer more substantive talks and have conversations and sharing around these topics.