

## **October 5: Rejoicing in Mission**

The seventy-two disciples that Jesus sent out on mission return to Jesus and express their joyful satisfaction that their mission proved successful. They were amazed that even the demonic powers were subject to them (in Hebrew thought, snakes and scorpions were symbols of various kinds of evils). Jesus rejoices with his disciples at the success of their missionary efforts.

Jesus then brings his disciples to a deeper understanding of their mission; they should rejoice not only that they were able to dispel the evil spirits, but that their names are written in heaven. The deepest joy of missionary-disciples is to realize that they are loved by God; they have become the chosen brothers and sisters of Jesus. In short, whether one's missionary efforts meet positive results or not, our deep joy comes from knowing that we are doing the mission for which we have been chosen and sent by Jesus.

Recall that at the beginning of this “missionary section” of Luke’s Gospel, Jesus sent out the seventy-two to prepare the towns and villages that he himself was going to visit (cf. Lk 10:1). As Jesus’ messengers we are to always remember that we are preparing people for acceptance of Jesus. Through our words and deeds we are readying the way for Jesus. We are like the precursor John the Baptist preparing for Jesus; “He must increase; I must decrease” (Jn 3:30). A modern translation says: “He must grow greater; I must grow smaller.”

Today’s Gospel concludes with Jesus telling his disciples that they should find great joy in their mission for their own eyes have seen the great things that God is accomplishing; salvation is arriving before their very own eyes. We truly rejoice whenever God uses us to accomplish his purposes. Indeed, as missionary disciples, we are Jesus’ “servants-become-friends” (cf. Jn 15:14-15)!