

Homily for XIV (14) Sunday in Ordinary Time Year C 03-07-2022 by Fr. Lubem Waya, osj

First Reading: Isaiah 66:10-14

Psalm: Psalm 66

Second Reading: Galatians 6:14-18

Gospel: 10:1-12.17-20

WHAT KIND OF HARVEST ARE YOU MAKING?

Our first reading reminds us of God's overflowing love for us. Often times God is depicted in scripture with masculine attributes portraying His strength as creator and initiator of everything, who manifests His power in supernatural occurrences such as thunder and lightning. Today however, we are presented with another side of God with feminine attributes which may *prima facie* appear as weakness but are in fact the real strength. That is, the traits of tenderness and compassion manifested in the imagery of a helpless Jerusalem who suckles and consoles her mourning children. Indeed, this is how God acts in relation to us. At times we see and experience His care in happenings around us that make us truly proud to acknowledge His strength as truly omnipotent and omniscient. Nevertheless, at other times, He chooses to manifest Himself to us in ways we are not so proud to reckon with; in circumstances that we *prima facie* consider as weakness just as we saw in His birth as a poor child in the manger. However, He is God for all seasons. He is with us when we are strong and His presence does not diminish in us even when we are weak in faith and spirit because of challenges and temptations. Indeed, in God, there is no distinction between weakness and strength since in all He remains God who is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

It is in view of God's invincibility, that, Isaiah today makes bold to console us in advance of the misfortunes we shall face as we follow God. Those inevitable moments when we would feel helpless, dispirited, and abandoned in the course of labouring in His vineyard such as is happening now in many places especially Nigeria where Christians are being decimated by Islamists on a daily basis under the watch of the government and the world. At such moments of persecution, humanly we may begin to feel helpless, and some believers could even doubt that God exists even when such creed does us no good. Truly we are at such a crossroads now more than ever in almost every part of the world. We are in the midst of wolves as lambs without security, power, and material wealth. This is a blunt reminder that the mission we are called to is and can only be realized always in the logic of the cross. That is why through the prophet Isaiah, God has promised to all His enduring servants who make a good harvest, joy, and peace that shall flourish like a river in the end. Are you making a good harvest?

Today the Lord Jesus charges us all His disciples to make a good harvest. He did this by sending the seventy-two in pairs. This is the first indication of their individual weakness and inadequacy, which to further concretise, He Himself would declare that the harvest is rich but the labourers are few. Their task is, therefore, to ask the Lord of the harvest to send labourers into His vineyard. Asking the Lord for labourers is a recognition that the labour is itself God's and not ours. If we call it a battle, it is the Lord's and not man's. As a challenge, we cannot overcome it by our own means, save by His Divine help. Hence, the Lord instructed them not to carry personal effects since they wouldn't be needing them, even though He knew they would be rejected in certain areas. They must therefore depend only and solely on God who is the author and finisher of the mission. Are you depending on God? The one who relies on God, therefore, will be successful at last. Success according to Jesus' reckoning does not consist in doing supernatural and magnificent wonders but in the very simple fact that we are faithful to the end, whence we would have earned the privilege of having our names written in heaven. Is your name written in heaven? Our names will be written in heaven not when we have amassed wealth or positions but when the only boast we can make would be about the cross of our Lord. What do you boast about? May the Lord keep us faithful in the mission to the last. Amen.