

Gratitude Foundation



*“Were not ten cleansed? Where are the other nine?
Has only this foreigner returned to give thanks to God?”*

(Lk. 17:15-17)

Fourteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time—C

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“In all things give thanks, it is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus”

(1 Thess: 5:18)

Fourteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Reading 1

Isaiah 66:10-14c

Thus says the LORD:

Rejoice with Jerusalem and be glad because of her,
all you who love her;
exult, exult with her,
all you who were mourning over her!

Oh, that you may suck fully
of the milk of her comfort,
that you may nurse with delight
at her abundant breasts!

For thus says the LORD:

Lo, I will spread prosperity over Jerusalem like a river,
and the wealth of the nations like an overflowing torrent.

As nurslings, you shall be carried in her arms,
and fondled in her lap;
as a mother comforts her child,

so will I comfort you;
in Jerusalem you shall find your comfort.

When you see this, your heart shall rejoice
and your bodies flourish like the grass;
the LORD's power shall be known to his servants.

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 66:1-3, 4-5, 6-7, 16, 20

R. (1) **Let all the earth cry out to God with joy.**

Shout joyfully to God, all the earth,
sing praise to the glory of his name;
proclaim his glorious praise.

Say to God, "How tremendous are your deeds!"

R. **Let all the earth cry out to God with joy.**

"Let all on earth worship and sing praise to you,
sing praise to your name!"

Come and see the works of God,
his tremendous deeds among the children of Adam.

R. **Let all the earth cry out to God with joy.**

He has changed the sea into dry land;
through the river they passed on foot;
therefore let us rejoice in him.
He rules by his might forever.
R. Let all the earth cry out to God with joy.

Hear now, all you who fear God, while I declare
what he has done for me.
Blessed be God who refused me not
my prayer or his kindness!
R. Let all the earth cry out to God with joy.

Reading 2

Galatians 6:14-18

Brothers and sisters:
May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ,
through which the world has been crucified to me,
and I to the world.
For neither does circumcision mean anything, nor does uncircumcision,
but only a new creation.
Peace and mercy be to all who follow this rule
and to the Israel of God.

From now on, let no one make troubles for me;
for I bear the marks of Jesus on my body.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit,
brothers and sisters. Amen.

Alleluia

Colossians 3:15a, 16a

R. Alleluia, alleluia.
Let the peace of Christ control your hearts;
let the word of Christ dwell in you richly.
R. Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel

Luke 10:1-12, 17-20

At that time the Lord appointed seventy-two others
whom he sent ahead of him in pairs
to every town and place he intended to visit.
He said to them,
"The harvest is abundant but the laborers are few;
so ask the master of the harvest
to send out laborers for his harvest.
Go on your way;
behold, I am sending you like lambs among wolves.
Carry no money bag, no sack, no sandals;
and greet no one along the way.
Into whatever house you enter, first say,
'Peace to this household.'
If a peaceful person lives there,
your peace will rest on him;
but if not, it will return to you.
Stay in the same house and eat and drink what is offered to you,
for the laborer deserves his payment.
Do not move about from one house to another.
Whatever town you enter and they welcome you,
eat what is set before you,
cure the sick in it and say to them,
'The kingdom of God is at hand for you.'
Whatever town you enter and they do not receive you,
go out into the streets and say,
'The dust of your town that clings to our feet,
even that we shake off against you.'
Yet know this: the kingdom of God is at hand.
I tell you,
it will be more tolerable for Sodom on that day than for that town."

The seventy-two returned rejoicing, and said,
"Lord, even the demons are subject to us because of your name."
Jesus said, "I have observed Satan fall like lightning from the sky.
Behold, I have given you the power to 'tread upon serpents' and scorpions
and upon the full force of the enemy and nothing will harm you. Nevertheless, do not re-
joice because the spirits are subject to you,
but rejoice because your names are written in heaven."

Exegesis

Isaiah 66:10-14c

Our pericope is taken from the final chapter of *The Book of Isaiah*. Scholars commonly refer to the final section of Isaiah, chapters 56 through 66, as *Trito-Isaiah* or *Third Isaiah*. The setting of this final section of Isaiah is back in Jerusalem immediately following the Exile. Isaiah begins with events prior to the Exile, *Second-Isaiah*, chapters 40 through 55, deal with events during the time of the Exile.

Third-Isaiah compares the events of the delivery of the people from captivity in Babylon to the Exodus experience. Like the Exodus, freedom from Babylon marked the start of the journey to the Promised Land. The first events involve the long sojourn through the desert to settle the land. The second “Exodus” also begins with a journey, this time to reclaim and rebuild the temple, their rituals, the city and their lives. As they return to Jerusalem, they find their city burned and the temple destroyed. It must have been demoralizing to see the daunting task of rebuilding.

Throughout their years of bondage in Babylon, however, *Deutero-Isaiah*, repeatedly called on the people to rejoice with a lively hope that God would rescue them as He once did in Egypt. With their new freedom, *Trito-Isaiah* continually calls on the people to rejoice. “All who keep the sabbath free from profanation and hold to My covenant, them I will bring to My holy mountain and make joyful in My house of prayer.” (Is 56: 6-7). “They shall have a double inheritance in their land, everlasting joy shall be theirs.” (Is 61: 7). “I rejoice heartily in the Lord, in my God is the joy of my soul.” (Is 61: 10). “Lo, I am about to new heavens and a new earth; ... For I create Jerusalem to be a joy and its people to be a delight.” (Is 65: 17-18).

Our passage today is taken from a section that begins with verse seven of Chapter 66. The section is titled *Mother Zion* and begins as follows: “Before she comes to labor, she gives birth; before the pains come upon her, she safely delivers a child. Who ever heard of such a thing, or saw the like? Can a country be brought forth in one day, or a nation be born in a single moment? Yet Zion is scarcely in labor when she gives birth to her children. Shall I bring a mother to the point of birth, and yet not let her child be born? Says the Lord; or shall I allow her to conceive yet close her womb? Says your God” (Is 66: 7-9). This setting is necessary to understand the pericope that follows.

Mother Jerusalem has been in labor pains as she endured the agony of the Exile. Now she is about to give birth. There will be growing pains as her children seek to mature. Now Jerusalem is like a child in its mother’s arms. She is there to feed and comfort her children. She is there to carry them and fondle them in her lap.

Rejoice with Jerusalem and be glad because of her, all you who love her; exult, exult with her, all you who were mourning over her! The Exile must have been a time of mourning and loss. The sight of the destroyed temple and city must have caused a great deal of sadness and despair. In this new birth and this new beginning the prophet is calling on the people to rejoice in their new freedom and to rejoice in the possibilities that lie before them.

The prophet is reminding the people that God is with them. “Can a mother forget her infant, be without tenderness for the child of her womb? Even if she forget, I (Yahweh) will never forget you.” (Is 49: 15).

Exegesis (Continued)

Psalm 66:1-3, 4-5, 6-7, 16, 20

Psalm 66 consists of twenty verses. In the *New American Bible* it is titled *Praise of God, Israel's Deliverer*. The first twelve verses are a communal hymn of praise and thanksgiving to God for His powerful hand in delivering Israel. The final verses are a personal hymn of praise and thanksgiving to Yahweh.

Shout joyfully to God, all the earth, sing praise to the glory of His name. The Hebrew word that it translated as *God* in this verse is *Elohim*. The Hebrew word translated as *glory* is *kabod*. It connotes honor and glory, but *kabod* also infers that it is the divine presence that commands honor and glory.

Say to God, "How tremendous are Your deeds!" The word that is translated as *tremendous* in Hebrew is *yaray* which is often translated as *fear*; especially when referring to a human response to God, as in reverence and awe before the Almighty. Several English translations of this verse are as follows: "Say to God, 'How awesome are Your deeds!'"

He has changed the sea into dry land; through the river they passed on foot; therefore, let us rejoice in him. He rules by his might forever. The first part of this verse is calling on the people to remember the mighty hand of God as He delivered the Israelites from bondage in Egypt. "Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and the Lord swept the sea with a strong east wind throughout the night and so turned it into dry land." (Ex 14: 21). The second part of the verse recalls the power of God's hand opening the way for the Israelites to enter the Promised Land. "The people struck their tents to cross the Jordan, with the priests carrying the Ark of the Covenant ahead of them. No sooner had these priestly bearers of the Ark waded into the Jordan, which overflows all its banks during the entire season of the harvest, than the waters from upstream halted, backed up in a solid mass for a very great distance indeed, from Adam, a city in the direction of Zarethan; while those flowing downstream disappeared entirely. Thus, the people crossed over opposite Jericho." (Josh 3: 14-16). In this short verse the beginning of the Exodus and the final crossing into the Promised Land forty years later are remembered and honored.

Hear now, all you who fear God, while I declare what he has done for me. The Hebrew word translated as *fear* is again *yaray*. The underlying Hebrew word for *God* is *Elohim*, which is consistent throughout Psalm 66. The Hebrew word that is translated here as *me* is *nepes*. Which is the Hebrew word for *soul*. Several translations are as follows: *while I declare what He has done for my soul*.

Blessed be God who refused me not my prayer or his kindness! The Hebrew word that is translated as *kindness* is *hesed*. *Hesed* is most often translated as *steadfast love*. It also carried connotations of *faithfulness*, *mercy*, *goodness*, *kindness*, *loyalty*, and *immutability*. All the above are attributes of God's love, a word later translated into Greek as *Agape*. Note that this final verse moves from a communal prayer to a personal prayer.

Exegesis (Continued)

Galatians 6:14-18

Our pericope is taken from the conclusion of the *Letter to the Galatians*. In fact, verse eighteen is the final verse of the letter. Paul is writing to the Churches of the territory known as Galatia. Galatia was established as a Roman province in 25 B.C. The province was named after the Gauls, who settled in its northern region around 300 B.C. During his first missionary journey, Paul founded a Christian community in the southern part of Galatia, and during his second journey, he established another community in the northern region. Scholars debate as to the actual date of the writing as it is not clear whether he is writing to the southern or the northern communities.

The central focus of the letter is to combat infiltration of Judaizers in the community. There was much consternation within the community which consisted of mostly Gentiles. Judaizers were brothers who insisted that the nascent Christians fully adopt all the rituals of Judaism, including the initiation rite of Circumcision. They were teaching that the observance of the entire Mosaic Law was indispensable for salvation.

The conclusion of the letter begins with verse eleven, and the section is titled *The Final Admonition and Benediction*. "See with what large letters I am writing to you with my own hand. It is those who want to make a good showing in the flesh that would compel you to be circumcised, and only in order that they may not be persecuted for the Cross of Christ. For even those who receive circumcision to not themselves keep the law, but they desire to have you circumcised that they may glory in the flesh." (Gal 6: 11-13).

The Romans tolerated Judaism, viewing it as passive and non-threatening to their authority. They were quick to squelch, however, any uprising that they viewed as revolutionary. Perhaps the Judaizers were attempting to avoid persecution with an outward appearance of Judaism within the Church. In any event they were placing unnecessary burdens upon the Church. Paul insists that the focus must be centered on Christ, despite the imminent persecutions on the horizon.

May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. Paul describes this earlier in *Galatians*: "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me; and the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me. I do not nullify the grace of God; for if justification were through the law, then Christ died for no purpose." (Gal 2: 20-21).

For neither does circumcision mean anything, nor does uncircumcision, but only a new creation. Paul describes *new creation* in *Romans*: "For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God; for creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of the One who subjected it in hope; because creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and obtain the glorious liberty of the children of God." (Rom 8: 18-21). St. Peter also talks of this new creation as the Spirit of God renewing us and making us sharers of divine life. "His divine power has granted us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us to His own glory and excellence, by which He has granted to us His precious and very great promises, that through these you may escape from corruption that is in the world because of passion and become partakers of the divine nature." (2 Pt 3-4).

Exegesis (Continued)

Luke 10:1-12, 17-20

Our pericope includes a paragraph titled *The Mission of the Seventy-Two* and a paragraph titled *The Return of the Seventy-Two*. Our selection excludes a middle paragraph titled *Reproaches to Unrepentant Towns*. Some translations title this entire section *Acceptance and Rejection*. Acceptance and rejection of the Gospel certainly is experienced throughout, both by Jesus and His disciples. The account of the sending of the seventy-(two) is unique to Luke's Gospel.

Some translations place the word two in parenthesis as follows: the seventy-(two). The reason is that several of the ancient manuscripts read *seventy*. Some scholars argue that it should be seventy to follow the example of Moses who was instructed to choose seventy elders. "Then the Lord said to Moses, 'Assemble for me seventy of the elders of Israel, men you know for true elders and authorities among the people and bring them to the meeting tent.'" (Num 11: 16). At the ratification of the covenant Moses was told to have seventy elders accompany him. "Moses himself was told. 'Come up to the Lord, you and Aaron, with Nadab, Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel.'" (Ex 24: 1). My first reaction to this apparent discrepancy is that perhaps you and I make up the final pair of disciples, to make seventy-two.

They were sent two by two. This missionary practice seemed to be present in the early Church, e.g., "Now when the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent them Peter and John." (Acts 8: 14).

Our selected passage today is near the beginning of a section in Luke's Gospel that is titled *The Journey to Jerusalem: Luke's Travel Narrative*. This section begins with Chapter 9, verse 51: "When the days for His being taken up were fulfilled, He resolutely determined to journey to Jerusalem, and He sent messengers ahead of Him." (Lk 9: 51).

The first instruction that Jesus gives His disciples is go ahead of Him on the route to Jerusalem to prepare the way. The first thing that they were to do was to bring "Peace to this household" to those who would accept them. The next thing that they were instructed to do was to cure the sick. Luke, the physician, always emphasized the fact that salvation was about healing, healing made necessary by the blight of sin and alienation from God. The next thing that they were instructed to do was to proclaim, "The Kingdom of God is at hand." This proclamation echoes the words of Jesus Himself as He began His public ministry: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." (Mt 4: 17).

"The harvest is abundant, but the laborers are few; so ask the master of the harvest to send out laborers for his harvest." The image of the harvest supports the agricultural parables of Jesus, like the parable to the *Sower of the Seed* as found in chapter eight of Luke's Gospel.

Whatever town you enter, and they do not receive you, go out into the streets and say, 'The dust of your town that clings to our feet, even that we shake off against you.' It was customary for a Jewish person to shake the dust from their feet as they left Gentile territory and reentered Jewish lands. It was also a symbol of judgment. "Awake, awake! Put on your strength, O Zion; put on your glorious garments, O Jerusalem, holy city. No longer shall the uncircumcised or the unclean enter you. Shake off the dust, ascend to the throne, Jerusalem." (Is 52: 1-2).

Reflection

Our first reading this weekend is taken from the 66th Chapter of the Prophet Isaiah. Isaiah is writing at a time when the Israelite people are returning to the ruined city of Jerusalem. The temple is a pile of rubble, and they are being called to rebuild it and to rebuild their lives. I can only imagine what a daunting task it must have seemed to them. The scene is anything but joyful it would seem to me. Yet, the prophet is calling them to rejoice and be glad. Isaiah is assuring the people that God is with them as a loving mother cares for her child. He reminds them that God will be their strength and sustenance and comfort. He tells them that they will “flourish like the grass; the Lord’s power shall be known to his servants.” As children, they find themselves in a position of growth, a time of youthful energy and vitality. Their lives are in front of them and what they do with their lives will shape the outcome of the community that they seek to rebuild.

In our second reading St. Paul points to the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ as the source of his strength. The Lord is with him, and he even shares in the marks of Jesus on his body. These marks could be scars from his beatings or perhaps the stigmata, the wounds of the Cross. It is precisely in uniting himself to Jesus that he finds his strength, sustenance and comfort.

In our Gospel this weekend Jesus sends out 72 disciples two by two to bring the Good News to the towns that He was journeying to. They are sent out with nothing on the journey. It must have seemed like a frightening and daunting task. Jesus wants them to depend on nothing but the power and authority that He is giving them. Like the people of Isaiah’s time, they had to feel the power and providence of God with them. United with God and empowered with His grace they went forth with courage and boldness. They came back rejoicing in the experience.

Have you ever noticed that the most joyful people are usually the most giving people? What comes first the joy or the giving? Do joyful people give because they are joyful, or are giving people joyful because they are giving? I don’t know the answer, but I do know that they go hand-in-hand.

The following quotation from Rabindranath Tagore that I discovered a couple of years ago sums up our message this weekend:

I slept and dreamt life was joy.

I awoke and saw life was service.

I acted and behold service was joy.

Come Holy Spirit fill the hearts of us Your faithful and enkindle in us the fire of Your love.
Amen.

Yours in Christ,



Personal Witness

I am what is referred to as a second career vocation. I entered the seminary at the age of forty-two. I spent the first twenty-one years of my adult life working as a Certified Public Accountant. I was blessed to become a part of a growing firm and became a partner after just four years. We all worked hard and we were able to build a very successful regional firm consisting of twelve offices in two states with a large professional and paraprofessional staff.

One day during a particularly difficult week during our busy tax season a client called me and asked if I would meet with me over lunch. He sounded particularly depressed and upset. He was not a real joyful person to begin with, but that day I remember him being extremely down. He first asked how a \$10,000 capital loss would affect his tax return. I explained to him the tax saving that he might expect. It did not seem to satisfy him. This person was a multimillionaire. He had invested \$10,000 in a company stock that became worthless in just over a year. This singular financial transaction was the cause of his depression. I consoled him the best that I could and tried to enjoy my lunch (which I paid for).

I recall driving back to my office feeling sorry for my friend and client, not because he lost a little money, insignificant to him, but I was saddened that an insignificant monetary event could control his emotions and rob him of his joy. What I soon realized was that I saw myself in a very similar light, and that saddened me. There was something missing in my life, there was a lack of joy.

Providentially that following Sunday after Mass my pastor caught me on the way out of church. He asked me if I would help him out and serve on the parish finance council. Not being able to think of an excuse quickly enough, I agreed. That was only the beginning. The finance council led to the pastoral council, which led to ministry of lector, which led to ministry of the Eucharist, which led to teaching faith formation, which led to youth ministry, which led to the youth encounter movement, which led to Cursillo ministry, which led to the seminary, which led to the priesthood, and here I am.

Early in this journey I discovered what had been missing in my life, God. With the re-discovery of God, came a joy that I had never experienced before. It was a joy that comes only from uniting with Christ in authentic self-giving love. Joy is the fruit of the Holy Spirit. Joy is a dimension of authentic love. Joy is an embodied indwelling presence. Joy is participating in a community of love. Joy is contagious. The more joy we share, the more joy we experience. Joy comes from deep within and no external event can rob us of our joy. As Jesus faced the Cross and spoke of His indwelling presence, He said, "I tell you this so that My joy may be in you and your joy might be complete."

Share a little joy today. It will come back to you sevenfold.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Fr. Glenn".