

Fourteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C, catechist - RCLB Lectionary



Catechist Background and Preparation

To prepare for the session read all the readings:

Isaiah 66:10-14c

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

Galatians 6:14-18

Luke 10:1-12, 17-20

Spend a few minutes reflecting on what these readings mean for you today. Was there a particular reading which appealed to you? Was there a word or image that engaged you?

Read the Word in Liturgy and Catholic Doctrine sections. These give you background on what you will be doing this session. Read over the session outline and make it your own. Check to see what materials you will need for the session.

The Word in Liturgy



The third section of the Book of Isaiah, from which our first reading is taken, was written following Israel's return from exile, at a time when the Jewish people were both joyful at their restoration and in need of encouragement to sustain them in the task of rebuilding their entire society. In this passage we are presented with some of the most tender and moving imagery to be found anywhere in the sacred scriptures. Jerusalem is depicted as a nursing mother, fondling her infant. Further on, it is Yahweh who is identified as offering that maternal comfort to the people. The image of a river—always a sign of prosperity in that desert region—is used to convey the promise of great prosperity that the Lord will bring upon the people. It is significant to note that the “wealth of the nations” will flow into Jerusalem, perhaps a hint of the universalist perspective that foresaw an eventual gathering of even the pagan nations around the Lord's Temple in Jerusalem.

Just as Jerusalem in the first reading serves as an image of salvation for all peoples, so in Luke's Gospel the Holy City toward which Jesus journeys plays an important symbolic role as the place of salvation for all people. In today's description of the sending out of the seventy (some texts read seventy-two) on mission, Luke is clearly associating the missionary activity of his own community with a mandate from the Lord himself. The number in Jewish tradition is representative of the nations, another way that Luke expresses the legitimacy of his community's focus on evangelizing the Gentiles. The Lord tells the disciples that “the harvest



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is rich." Harvest, of course, was an eschatological symbol, evocative of the Day of the Lord, when the promise of salvation would be fulfilled. Little wonder that the disciples are portrayed as jubilant at the successes they have encountered. To a missionary community under siege as was Luke's, that image of eschatological success was an important source of comfort and encouragement. Luke wanted to remind his hearers that their work of evangelization is the Lord's work, and that it is sure to succeed as long as they are faithful to his mandate.

Catholic Doctrine

The Church Exists in order to Evangelize

The Second Vatican Council affirmed the centrality of evangelization in the life of the Church in *Ad Gentes* (7 December 1965). But it was Paul VI who wrote in the most detailed and concrete way about evangelization. This pope promulgated his encyclical letter on evangelization to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the closing of the Second Vatican Council. His first point is clear: Jesus Christ is the first evangelizer. He is the good news of God, to the point of perfection and to his own self-sacrifice, proclaiming the kingdom or dominion of God and the happiness of those who are joined to this kingdom. This happiness is paradoxical, however, because the world rejects the things, which make up this kingdom.

It is the vocation of the Church to continue spreading the good news of Jesus and follow in the footsteps of the Twelve who were commanded by the Lord to carry the gospel to all, engaging in the ministry of preaching, teaching and healing. Indeed, Paul VI characterizes evangelization as the "deepest identity" of the Church.

Born through the evangelizing efforts of Jesus, the Church, in turn engages in self-evangelization and the evangelization of the world. The purpose of both this internal and external evangelization is conversion, to make of all of the world and everyone in it that "new creation." For, if the gospel is proclaimed and accepted, then humanity's judgment, determining values, points of interest, lines of thought, sources of inspiration and models of life which are contrary to the good news will be upset and reformed. (EN 19) In other words, what is being evangelized is culture, not superficially but radically and vitally, to its depth. Paul VI notes, "The split between the Gospel and culture is without doubt the drama of our time, just as it was of other times. Therefore every effort must be made to ensure a full evangelization of culture, or more correctly of cultures. They have to be regenerated by an encounter with the Gospel. But this encounter will not take place if the Gospel is not proclaimed."

The content of this proclamation is, in a nutshell, that God loves us, redeems us in Jesus, —
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frees us from sin, promises us eternal life, and that the Word of God has relevance to our—— lives here and now as we await the fulfillment of the kingdom. This content is expressed and conveyed by a variety of means which include personal example, preaching, catechetics, the use of mass media, individual contact, through Word and Sacrament, and through popular piety and devotion. Thus, Catholic evangelizing efforts are comprehensive, woven directly into all facets of life and our activities.

