

14<sup>th</sup> Sunday (C)

7<sup>th</sup> July 2019

'Peace be to this House!'

Is 66: *as one whom his mother comforts, so will I comfort you.*

Ps 65: *Come and hear, all who fear God. I will tell what he did for my soul.*

Gal 6: *what matters is for him to become an altogether new creature.*

Lk 10:1–12, 17–20: *take no purse, no haversack, no sandals*

The Gospel passage for this Sunday presents the great mission of the wider group of Jesus's disciples ("the 72") going off to preach in all the surrounding villages, and persevering in the task He had given them. It's a demanding work, requiring constant effort, but the disciples are encouraged by the welcome that they receive, and the faith that they have strengthened in those who listened. But as we hear, they are not welcomed everywhere — some places refuse to listen to them, and the Gospel message falls on deaf ears. It seems, at first, an extraordinary thing, doesn't it, that with all these followers testifying to Him, and with His own divine presence to follow shortly, that Jesus's message should be only partially received, and by some ignored completely. His is the unique message of salvation — it's the answer to life, the universe and everything. And yet, still, many find ways simply not to hear and not to see, that the Son of God is amongst us, in

our midst, wanting to bless our lives and help us live well.

We're keeping, over 3 days this weekend, the great devotion of the 40 Hours' Adoration, and in this prolonged act of prayer, and with the Blessed Sacrament Procession (tomorrow), we make a profound statement about our recognising Jesus in our midst. He Himself gave us this sacred way to know Him and for Him to come to us; we didn't invent it! And yet, as we make these wonderful and peaceful hours of prayer, and as we follow Jesus joyfully in the Procession, it's also true that many others might not recognise Him in the Blessed Sacrament, any more than they always did in the towns and villages of Galilee. We do know Him; we know that in His humility He has let Himself be reduced to these humble forms, so we can have easy access to Him. It is our joy to sit with Him in prayer, to let Him speak to us, and in the Procession literally to act out our following Him, honouring Him as our Lord and Master.

It's important as Catholics to give due honour to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, and to help others to understand Him and come to know Him. There's no better

way for us to bring people to Christ than to invite them to Mass. Bringing people to Mass may open up for them all sorts of questions that we can start to answer; but in the first instance it's Christ who is doing the work. Christ, in the Holy Sacrament of the Mass is active and appealing. He is quietly, divinely, and humbly active, calling to us and to others to be with Him. It is not a loud, coercive, or brash appeal, but one that is felt deeply in the heart — the Lord who is all-powerful who simply wants to love and be loved.

When the disciples took the Gospel to the streets, homes and villages, the very thing that they were instructed by Jesus to open with was 'peace.' "Peace to this house," they were told to say. It's important that as we seek to bring others to Christ, and as we endeavour to devote ourselves ever more faithfully to Jesus in the Mass ourselves, we recognise that the Eucharist brings us peace. Jesus's holy presence brings us peace, the antidote to the fretfulness of the world. So many worries of life can be put into perspective when we allow ourselves to enjoy the peace of Christ: "Peace that the world cannot give, this is My gift to

you," He taught. We all wish for more peace, in our hearts, in our lives, in our families, in our nation, in the world ... Of course we do; it's a great desire. But where shall we find that true peace except by going to the source of all peace, the Son of God.

So, in order to find that peace: (i) First, let's commit ourselves to the prayer that is the best of all prayers, the Mass, and the extended fruits of the Mass which come in Adoration; let's use the wonderful opportunity that this weekend offers us, to give time to Jesus and implore His holy peace. (ii) And second, let's commit ourselves to reaching out to others in order to bring them to Mass, to Christ, and to faith — to do so is to offer them a peace that nothing else on earth can give them, for it is the peace that comes from heaven. We, then, can be those disciples who go ahead of the Lord, announce Him, and make Him known ahead of His coming personally into the lives of others. We, too, can be the ones who cry out with those words that are sorely needed, in our own homes and in the homes of those we love: "the peace of Christ be to this house!"