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by Mary M. McGlone

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What would it have been like to be among the 72 Jesus sent out to preach his Gospel? Did they feel prepared for their mission? Considering the lack of expertise of the Twelve who walked with Jesus full time, what must 72 more or less random disciples have been like?

Jesus sent them out in utter vulnerability — no credit cards, no special garb to underwrite their authority, not even a per diem to assure them of room and board. Add to it, he told them they would be like lambs among wolves.

Crazy? Absolutely! Worth the risk? Apparently so. It worked then and inexperienced people, including ourselves, continue to offer Christ's living message to others.

What did Jesus ask of them? To demonstrate that God's reign was active in their world. Jesus saw a world desperately in need of healing and hope. He saw oppression, not only on the political level, but throughout society where "important" people disparaged those they considered beneath them because of their poverty, occupation, gender or any other "distinguishing" marks.

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Isaiah 66:10-14c

Psalms 66

Galatians 6:14-18

Luke 10:1-12, 17-20

The disciples' only mission was to reveal how God was reigning in their world. Jesus offered them no preaching technique, no potions or blessing formula, he simply sent them out in peace to receive what was offered and to heal those in need.

What happened in the process amazed them as much as anyone else. Reporting back to Jesus they said, "Even the demons are subject to us because of your name!"

Because they had gone in the name of Jesus, bringing his love and energy to each situation, their very presence healed. That was the secret of the peace they shared.

If people were open to their message, the experience of God's reign grew among them. When people refused the message, the disciples could move on in peace, knowing that what God offers can never be imposed, it can only be welcomed.

What gave them such great power? St. Paul described it to the Galatians. He explained that people who share God's love know God's reign is among them. They have become a new creation. They are free from the need to protect themselves from the unknown or social norms that demand certain types of behavior. As Isaiah promises, no matter the circumstances, they can flourish like grass because their way of living draws forth all that they can become and they know God is with them.

Today's Liturgy of the Word dares us to be sheep among wolves, to be evangelizers in a world dying for lack of love. The wolves of our time are purveyors of the fear and hatred that spawn every type of bigotry, division, violence and lies.

[Pope Leo XIV tells us](#) that as disciples, we are sent into "many settings in which the Christian faith is considered absurd, meant for the weak and unintelligent. Settings where other securities are preferred, like technology, money, success, power or pleasure ... where believers are mocked, opposed, despised or at best tolerated and pitied."

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What do we have to offer? Like the inexperienced 72, we've got nothing more than our experience of the joy of living Christ's message. As disciples, we can continue to share experiences of love, hope and possibility that are strong enough to seduce others into believing the unbelievable: that the reign of God is at hand.

If we want to succeed in taking up Jesus' mission, we will draw people through attraction rather than rational proofs. We need to know our faith by heart and accept the fact that what we offer will only attract the hungry; the complacent know how to stay safe behind what old toothpaste ads called "an invisible protective shield." As Leo points out, they prefer the kind of securities they can buy or demand. They are tragically out of touch with their deepest yearnings, invulnerable to knowing the vastness of God's love.

Evangelizers know that the reign of God they announce is real. They've experienced it in communion with God and others. They know it can't be proven, only

experienced, and when it is experienced, it's contagious.

That's the secret of greeting a household with "Shalom, peace." People disposed to receive the Gospel and the fullness it offers, will share the disciples' peace. The missionaries continue on in peace, knowing that they offered — even if their offerings were not appreciated.

We are today's 72. The evangelization we can offer has little to do with expertise. Rather, it's the contagious energy of God's reign among us. It has the power to make Satan fall like lightning, noisy and momentarily impressive, but gone in a flash.

Most of all, our awareness of God's reigning grows prodigiously as we share it. We can only share what we have, and that is enough.

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