



Fourteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

† Sunday 7th July 2019

In England and Wales – Prayer for a deeper understanding between Christians, Jews, Moslems and other faiths.

Keynote: Jesus calls us to be bringers of peace like a flowing river

Prophet Isaiah 66: 10-14

This reading speaks of the glorious new Jerusalem of the future. The ancients regarded the splendour of Jerusalem – the Holy City – as being of great importance and, even today, Jerusalem is the subject of dispute and longing by people of many faiths. The prophet speaks of the time yet to come, when the mourning and sadness is over *‘When all who love her can be glad for her!’* For Jerusalem, the city that represents so much, the city in which the glory of God resides, is a sign for the future. *‘For thus says the Lord: Now towards her I send flowing peace, like a river, and like a stream in spite the glory of the nations... Like a son comforted by his mother, will I comfort you,’* says God, *‘and by Jerusalem you will be comforted. At the sight your heart will rejoice.’* This longing for the new Jerusalem, for the end of war, for an end to vengeance and violence, for the rising of the dead, for the era of lasting peace that will come, is a longing we can share, and something that we ourselves can work towards.

Responsorial Psalm 65 (66) – a song of praise to God who saves

Letter of Paul to the Galatians 6: 14-18

For Paul the only important distinguishing mark, the only thing about which the apostle will make his boast, *‘is the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.’* The externals of religion, like circumcision do not matter *‘what matters,’* he says, *‘is to become an altogether new creature.’* Paul speaks of the **‘stigmata’** the marks on his own body – as if they were medals won in battle – maybe some reference to the floggings and beatings he had received in the course of his missionary travels. He is proud of these marks of Jesus, and elsewhere in his writings he uses the word *‘stigmata’* to refer to the brand mark on a slave, for he sees himself as the slave of Jesus Christ. In the end he says, *‘What matters is to become an altogether new creature. Peace and mercy to all who follow this rule, who form the Israel of God.’* We have a longing for peace; born, and recreated anew in the Spirit, we are to be bringers of peace.

Gospel according to Luke 10: 1-12, 17-20

‘The Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them out ahead of him, in pairs, to all the towns and places he himself was to visit. He said to them ‘the harvest is rich, but the labourers are few, so ask the Lord of the harvest to send labourers to his harvest.’” Luke reflects upon the nature of mission, its joys and its sorrows. Besides the practical things, like not taking the usual essentials for a journey, a purse, bag or sandals, the disciples are told what to do when they enter a house, *‘Let your first words be, “Peace to this house!”’* says Jesus, *‘If a man of peace lives there, your peace will go and rest on him.’* This sending of the seventy-two disciples marks the next stage in the proclamation of the good news. The healing of the sick, bringing God’s mercy and freedom to the poor is rolling out across the hills and towns of Israel. We too are called to be disciples; we too share the responsibility of mission, of evangelisation. We too are bringers of the good news, bringers of peace – peace that is the first and most important gift of God’s kingdom.