



Jesus appointed seventy-two other disciples 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."

**Introductory Prayer:** Good Jesus, thank you for this opportunity to speak with you again and to listen to you. I know that you have longed for this moment we will spend together. You silently wait for hours in the tabernacle, hoping that one of your friends will come to make a visit. You always have something to say when we finally turn to you, so I willingly set aside all distractions and give you my undivided attention.

**Petition:** Grant me, Lord, the grace to accept your instructions with a great spirit of simplicity.

**1. The Harvest:** The Holy Spirit works constantly to stir up souls and prompt them to turn their lives toward God. He nudges them when they listen to Scripture or a homily. He speaks to them in the little events of day-to-day life. But there is often one other ingredient he uses to reach souls: He uses us. He uses our example, our words, our drawing close to others. This is why Our Lord speaks of a crop waiting to be harvested. Harvesting is all about toil and timing. Crops not brought in quickly rot in the field. What harvest of souls might Our Lord be asking me to help with? It might be an engaged couple who need to be helped in their faith. It might be a sick relative who needs to

prepare spiritually for death. It might be a troubled teen who needs guidance to keep on the right path. All these could be souls who need help now. Will I respond?

**2. Full-time Laborers:** Besides the work that all of us are called to do by our baptism, there is also a need for people who dedicate their entire lives to the mission of evangelization. Priests especially are needed, to consecrate the Eucharist and to grant absolution within the sacrament of reconciliation. The principle outlined in the first point of this meditation applies here as well: The Holy Spirit inspires new vocations, and frequently he depends on others to promote this work. Do I join in this crucial work for the Church? Do I encourage vocations? Do I speak well of priests and religious? Am I willing to let a son or daughter, a brother or sister, pursue a vocation? Do I see that the vocation I encourage today might be the vocation that helps save the soul of a child or grandchildren in the future?

**3. Details Matter:** Jesus' precise instructions to his disciples show that details matter to him. Our Lord doesn't leave anything to chance. He has a system for how to evangelize, and it is crucial that the disciples follow his orders precisely. This reminds us that work of evangelization and building the Kingdom is Jesus', and as such he makes the rules. Free-lance evangelization doesn't substitute for what Christ wants. This principle applies to all walks of life. Hence, there are rules that regulate conduct within marriage and before marriage. There are guidelines as to what lawmakers can and cannot support, and how businesspeople should and should not treat their employees and customers. Might I think that I'm exempt from Christ's rules? Might I be living my faith on my terms, rather than on Christ's?

**Conversation with Christ:** Lord, help me avoid fooling myself that I'm doing your will, when in fact I might be following my own whims. Let me appreciate that there is a teamwork aspect to the Christian life that helps me grow in patience and humility.

**Resolution:** I will pray or offer up a sacrifice for vocations, or speak of vocations to at least one person, either by word or by e-mail.