14 C 2025

 It is Ordinary Time in the liturgical year. Joy should be a part of our lives—remembering and taking to heart all that God has done for us—comforting us and providing for us so that we flourish and know the power at work in us, and in the world. We have been given even God’s greatest gift—Jesus, His beloved child. We are baptized and live in the power of His cross and resurrection, and made utterly new.

 Living a God-fearing life—Father, Son, Spirit—is the sign of being Christian. Living the Paschal Mystery are the marks of being Catholic. Living to bring the Gospel to people and people to the Gospel is living Franciscan. Have we ever suffered for what we believe? Have we shared our blessings with others? Do we dwell in peace and mercy so that the world is convinced of our love of God?

 During Jesus’ life, the disciples walked behind Him on the road. They followed Jesus to Jerusalem, the place of execution. They followed Him in and out of the Temple and into the Garden of Olives. After His death and resurrection, they are still in the same position of following. *“But go, tell His disciples and Peter that He is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see Him, just as He told you.” “As they came near the village to which they were going, He walked ahead as if He were going on.”* Both before and after His death and resurrection, Jesus shows the way.

 While Jesus was in the flesh, the Lord sent out the Seventy disciples ahead of Him in pairs to every town and place where He himself intended to visit. He reminds them of everything they need to know and do in order to be faithful to their mission. He hopes they are ready and knows that they are not. They are like lambs in a world of wolves. Paradoxically, this is precisely who they should be. Jesus’ way is a way of peace, and not violence.

Now, Jesus sends us out, two by two, to go before Him into the world. We are to go lightly, with only what we need, remembering that we are peacemakers in a world wounded by hatred, scarred by violence. As Franciscans our first word should be the opening word of “peace.”

*“May the Lord give you peace.”* We are minstrels of the Lord, singing joy into joyless hearts. We **listen** to the voice of the Lord; we **discern** His life-giving Word; we **go forth** to be imitations of what is coming—the reign of God’s peace with abiding justice for all.

I can’t help but ask “where is the peace of Christ today?” I suspect God is asking the same question. Let us number ourselves among the 70 sent to proclaim peace. The events of the today’s world offer us the opportunity to rethink what peace means and reorient our hearts.

Peace does not begin with our behaviors toward each other, like loving our neighbor, like loving our enemies, like being merciful and not judging, like offering forgiveness not seventy times but at all times. Peace is not about prescribing behaviors. Peace is about our way of being toward each other, our seeing each other as images of God, created in His image and likeness. Our behavior can be determined by our way of being toward one another.

Jesus did not send the 70 to change the towns and places they would go but to simply offer His peace. Jesus doesn’t instruct us to go and change other people. He teaches us to change ourselves and our way of being toward another. It’s a matter of the heart, recognizing the value of the person as a human being, regardless of who they are.

Sixty years ago, the Second Vatican Council was convened. Aware of the “signs of the times,” St John XXIII jump-started a movement when he opened a window, letting in the sweet breath of the Holy Spirit to penetrate the hearts of the lay faithful, that they should be fully included in the apostolic mission of the Church. We keep in mind that it is a privilege and an honor to live in the kingdom now, and be part of Jesus’ mission to make holy the whole world.

