



July 4, 2010
Fourteenth Sunday of Ordinary Time

“He said to them, ‘The harvest is abundant but the laborers are few; so ask the master of the harvest to send laborers for his harvest.’”—Luke 10:2

Dear Friends:

Each week I travel to Sacramento and pass through the farm country between here and Stockton. During its season I see large numbers of Hispanic laborers crouching over the fields doing the back breaking work of picking asparagus. I think, “Why is it someone cannot invent a tool so that they do not have to stoop over all day?”

And yet out of desperation to improve their lot, they come to this country to do a job for which none of us would sign up. As a social class, they are often vilified and are made scapegoats for social and economic problems. Yet they still do the job. To this day I never see asparagus on a plate and not offer a prayer for those who harvested it. We should all be mindful of and grateful from where our food comes.

Today Jesus speaks of his mission as a great harvest. And there are not enough to join in the back breaking work of proclaiming the Word of God. So what would make anyone want to join Jesus in this difficult task?

I believe that the only thing which could move us to take on such hard work is our need to draw closer to Jesus. We are desperate to know his healing, forgiveness and love. And we are willing to do what it takes to get close to him.

In this particular section of Luke’s Gospel we are being told what the demands of following Jesus are. Jesus is telling us that his journey to the Father and glory takes him to Jerusalem where he will face death. To be a disciple means with Jesus I too carry a cross.

To be a disciple means to proclaim the reign of God—that is to begin to bring God’s justice and peace wherever we are. Often when we do this we will face rejection and sometimes they will try to kill us. And yet what makes it worthwhile? It will be those moments when we see the snakes and scorpions of injustice eradicated. To see joy on the faces of those who have discovered God’s peace becomes its own reward and a taste of heaven.

Today we celebrate the 234th year of our country’s founding. It was founded upon the promise of freedom and justice for all. As we celebrate today let us also recall all who have over the years toiled that we could enjoy the blessings we possess. Let us also remember those who still are coming to our shores. Let us not begrudge them the same opportunities with which we and our ancestors have been blessed. Happy Independence Day!

Peace,

Fr Ron