

**Jesus, the Seventy Disciples, and the New Priesthood
(14th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C)**

Isaiah 66:10-14—The New Jerusalem

- 1. New Jerusalem: Jerusalem, the “mother city” (Greek *mater-polis*) (66:10)

Psalm 66—Let All the Earth Cry Out to God

- 1. Gentiles: “all the earth worships thee....” (v. 4)

Galatians 6:14-18—The New Creation

- 1. New Creation: circumcision does not matter, but a “new creation” (6:15)

Luke 10:1-12, 17-20—Jesus Chooses Seventy Disciples

- 1. Seventy (-Two?): How many disciples?
 - a. 70 (Codex Sinaiticus, Alexandrinus) or 72 (Papyrus 75, Codex Vaticanus)
 - b. “Seventy elders” (Exod 24:1-11) plus “two men” cf. Num 11:16-30
 - c. Hebrew Manuscripts: 70 nations (Gen 11, Masoretic Text)
 - d. Greek Septuagint: 72 nations (Gen 11, LXX)
- 2. Mission: Jesus sends them out “two by two” (10:1)

Moses and the Priestly Hierarchy

Moses

The 1: the High Priest, Aaron

The 3: Aaron, Nadab, Abihu

The 12: Twelve Pillars / “Young Men”
of the Twelve Tribes

The 70: Priestly Elders of Israel
(Exod 24:1-11)

Jesus and His Disciples

Jesus

The 1: Peter, leader of the Apostles

The 3: Peter, James, and John

The 12: Twelve Apostles
of the Twelve Tribes

The 70: Appointed and Sent Out
(Luke 6:14; 9:32; 10:1-20; 22:28-34)

The Living Tradition

Bede the Venerable: [J]ust as the number of the twelve apostles marked the beginning of the episcopal rank, it is apparent that *the seventy-two disciples*, who were also sent out by the Lord to preach the word, signify in their selection the lesser rank of the priesthood that is now called the presbyterate. (Bede, *On the Tabernacle*, 3.112; trans. A. G. Holder)

Roman Rite of Ordination:

*In the desert you extended the spirit of Moses to seventy wise men
who helped him to rule the great company of his people.*

You shared among the sons of Aaron the fullness of their father’s power,
to provide worthy priests in sufficient number
for the increasing rites of sacrifice and worship.

With the same loving care you gave companions to your Son’s apostles

to help in teaching the faith: they preached the Gospel to the whole world.

Lord, grant also to us such fellow workers,

for we are weak and our need is greater.

(Rite of Ordination of a Priest, no. 22; trans. ICEL)

Questions for Discussion and Reflection (14th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C)

1. What is unique about the New Jerusalem? What role will the Gentiles have in the new city of God?

2. Why do some manuscripts say 72 and some 70 disciples? How might we explain it?

3. How does the Rite of Ordination apply the Seventy Disciples to the Priesthood?

For Further Study

1. Bede, *On the Tabernacle* (trans. Arthur G. Holder; Translated Texts for Historians 18; Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1994), 128-29.

2. *The Rites of the Catholic Church, Volume Two* (trans. ICEL; Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1991), 44.