

It is only in Luke that Jesus sends out a group of seventy-two disciples. As he does so, the first request Jesus makes of them is to ask God, the Lord of the harvest, to send out more laborers into the harvest. Seventy-two laborers are not enough. The harvest is so rich that an abundance of laborers are needed. This is a very important message for the church in our own day, especially in our own country, in our own Diocese. More and more people are needed to take responsibility for the life of the church, for the work of the Lord. In sending out this large group, Jesus is not slow to draw attention to the difficulties they will face.

1. The Laborers are those who live a spirit of contentment. To live a detached and contented life is simply to live in the present. That is why Jesus says, "Carry no money bag, no sack, no sandals; and greet no one along the way for the laborer deserves his payment".
2. The seventy-two are to proclaim two messages, which overlap very much 'Peace to this house', and 'the kingdom of God is very near to you'. And this good news regardless of how they are received; they are to announce it to those who welcome them and to those who reject them. They are to proclaim the presence of God in Jesus to all, the receptive and the unreceptive. Regardless of whether the gospel is well received or badly received, the kingdom of God remains very near to us.
3. People's response may differ, but God remains the same. God is powerfully at work when the gospel is being rejected as much as when it is being received. God was as powerfully present on Good Friday as he was on Easter Sunday. Even in those times when our labors for the Lord do not appear to be bearing much fruit, when our witness to the Lord is not being well received, the kingdom of God remains very near to all of us.
4. Now each of us in broad sense, in different ways, is called to be a labourer in the Lord's harvest. The world is in great need of the love and mercy of Christ. It's like a dry and barren land waiting to

soak up the gentle rain. You are that rain and our Lord wants to send you forth to bring His grace to the world.

*Lord, I thank you for choosing me as your instrument for your mission. Give me your grace so that I may be faithful and give myself to Your service. I lay my life down at Your feet and commit to the mission You have in store for me. I thank You, Lord, for loving me enough that I may be used by You. Use me as You will, dear Lord. Jesus, I trust in You.*