

OUR LADY STAR OF THE SEA, WEYMOUTH

HOMILY FOR THE FOURTEENTH ORDINARY SUNDAY (C) 4TH JULY 2010

Our Gospel follows on from last Sunday's, when Jesus, at the start of his journey to Jerusalem, called people to follow him but they all hesitated. St. Luke implies that Jesus left them behind. He could not wait.

Now Jesus has found others who are willing to follow him, so he appoints them and sends them out like the twelve apostles whom he has already chosen.

St. Luke does not tell us much about them. He calls them "others"; no names, no age, no gender. Even the number 72 is symbolic rather than exact. They could be anyone.

Jesus gives them a clear mission.

They are to go ahead of him to prepare for his coming later.

They are to go to people's homes and bring peace to their homes.

They are to speak to no one until they reach a house and then say, "Peace to this house!"

They are not to go and teach in the synagogues, they are not to preach on the roadside or in the market-place, they are not to start churches, they are to bring Jesus' peace to houses.

The focus is on houses, on homes.

Jesus' mission does not change. If that was what he wanted then that is what he wants now. Jesus wants to come to us in our homes, to bring his peace to our homes, to make our homes holy with his presence. We have the mission, the vocation, to make this possible.

The bishops of England and Wales have recognised this and are trying to help us. They are telling us that home is a holy place because God is present wherever there is love. If our homes are places where we love each other then our home is a holy place.

They are telling us that home is a holy place because relationships at home reflect God's relationship with us if we are trying to live together in love and peace.

They are telling us that home is a holy place because God's presence graces all his creation.

Holiness is not the same as success. A home is holy where the family members treat each other with Jesus' love, justice, understanding and selflessness, where we live in his peace.

Pope John Paul II called home "the domestic church".

Churches are holy places. Our homes can be holy places, too. We do not leave church as we leave the building. We go from one area of Church to another area of Church, from the parish church to the domestic church.

The domestic church supports the parish church and the parish supports the domestic. They are like two arms of the one Catholic body.

Bodies function best when both arms are working properly.

When the deacon says: “Go in peace to love and serve the Lord” he is indicating that we are moving from the parish church to the domestic church as we go home.

It is the vocation of all of us to make the domestic church holy.

It is a vocation for some of us to make the parish church holy as priests.

The two vocations are closely linked. Holy homes inspire holy priests. It’s a challenge.

The bishops have produced a website to help us. We have produced a leaflet. There is also a link on the parish website.

The leaflet contains a prayer. If we pray the prayer and help each other we can dare to hope that we will experience the same joy as the 72 who were amazed to discover that even “the devils submit to us when we use your name” and, as Jesus said to them, our names will be written in heaven.

Rev Geoff Carey