

**To glory in the cross of Christ?**

**A bit strange, no?**

**Kind of like to glory in the electric chair**

**That is what the cross was**

**It was more than just a way for the state to execute someone**

**It was a gruesome, violent way to die**

**The most humiliating way for the state to do this**

**It was meant to keep others from following suit**

**Why does St Paul call us to glory in this?**

**We have to recall his entire statement**

**He is not calling us to glory in the cross alone**

**Christians are not masochists**

**He is calling us to glory in the cross of Christ**

**Christ gives the cross new meaning**

**It is really this understanding of the cross that sets Christianity apart**

**This is what it is to be a disciple of Christ**

**It is not about the suffering**

**It is about what it means**

**It is a sign of discipleship**

**A sign we have been called**

**A sign we have been sent on a special mission**

**And that we understand this**

**This is foretold by the prophets**

**Our reading from Isaiah speaks of a Jerusalem in ruins**

**But it will not remain in ruins**

**God Himself watches over them**

**Like a mother looking upon her newborn child**

**God will look upon his Chosen People**

**He will comfort them in their sorrow**

**He will offer abundant blessings upon them**

**The people of Jerusalem see tribulations as punishment from God**

**God sees them as opportunities to call them to repent**

**To return to Him**

**So he can give them what they need to live**

**So He can give them Himself**

**Our second reading is from the Letter of St Paul to the Galatians**

**It is in this letter that St Paul opens our hearts to a new understanding**

**Many people in his time looked at suffering as the ancients did**

**As a punishment**

**But Paul tells them that he glories in the cross of Christ**

**This is what gives Christian's their identity**

**It is not in external signs such as circumcision**

**It is not in external following the law**

**It is not about being male or female**

**Greek or Jew**

**Before Christ, the cross was a sign of death**

**Now it becomes a passage way to life**

**What the world values are not what God values**

**The death and resurrection of Christ turned the natural world-view upside down**

**The mission of the seventy-two reflect this as well**

**They are sent by Christ**

**No money belt**

**No sack**

**No extra sandals**

**Greet no one on the way**

**These are things the world tells us are important**

**But Christ instructs them to accept the hospitality of their hosts**

**And to offer peace to that household**

**This peace is more than the traditional greeting of Shalom**

**This is a peace of heart**

**The peace he will gain for us on the cross**

**A peace that is not dependent on external things**

**And if they are rejected, they are to shake to dust from their feet**

**When the Israelites traveled from the Holy Land**

**Walking through pagan lands, they would get dirty and dusty**

**When they returned to the Holy Land**

**They would remove their sandals**

**And shake the dust off**

**Symbolizing they were to separate themselves from the pagans**

**There was a difference between those living under God's covenant**

**And those outside of it**

**For the followers of Christ to shake the dust from their feet**

**Was a statement that the covenant was offered**

**And was rejected**

**Those who do not accept Christ are considered pagan territory**

**Even with this, the seventy-two did not grasp what was happening**

**They returned**

**Boasting of all that happened**

**The human authority went to their heads**

**Something we all have to be aware of**

**Jesus tells them to look beyond this world**

**Yes, they are to rejoice**

**But to rejoice that their names are written in the Book of Life**

**Again, a new way to look at our lives**

**Our readings have an important message for the world today**

**First, God will watch over His children**

**As He did at the time of Isaiah**

**As He did for the Galatians**

**As He continues to do today**

**There is also a message our Holy Father is calling us to notice**

**And to live**

**It is a message of simplifying our lives**

**And ordering them in the right way**

**Who were these 72?**

**The 12 Apostles were not a part of this group**

**Other than this short passage, they are not mentioned in any of the Gospels, and none of them are named**

**Our Christian lives are not about fame**

**This is not a guarantee of success**

**One way to see them is as representatives for all ages**

**They were sent**

**We are sent**

**They had a specific mission**

**As each of us has a specific mission**

**Jesus gave them instructions**

**Simplify**

**We need to hear this, especially today**

**It is so easy to accumulate things**

**Materially and spiritually**

**Thinking that these things will buy happiness**

**Thinking things will buy security for me or my family**

**Thinking these will ensure our salvation**

**But these things can entrap us**

**We can even become enslaved to them**

**It is good to let go of things occasionally**

**So we can focus on what is important**

**Faith, family and friendship**

**We can also get caught up spiritually**

**We can have so many devotions we forget to pray**

**Our spiritual lives can become as complicated and cluttered as  
our material life**

**We lose sight of the cross**

**We can become distracted by others around us**

**This is why it is good to have crucifixes in our homes and churches**

**To bring our lives into focus**

**A teacher was trying to get a group of students ready for 1<sup>st</sup>**

**Communion**

**They were walking all over the place**  
**Trying to follow the one directly in front of them**  
**So she stopped and told them**  
**When you are going up**  
**Look at the cross and you will be OK**  
**We sometimes need this advice**  
**Just look at the cross, and we will be OK**  
**Because this is the key**  
**When we see life through the cross**  
**It all comes into proper focus and perspective**  
**It is not about doing everything**  
**It is about being faithful and doing what we do well**  
**A spiritual writer once said**  
***In the spiritual life we grow not by addition but by subtraction***  
**This is true in our material life as well**  
**Simplify materially and spiritually**  
**Focusing on what truly matters; faith, family and friendship**  
**Focusing on the cross of Christ**