

For the Journey - June 11/26 - Rev. Dave Crawford



Quite a busy weekend ahead in Crossfield, and abroad. Pete Knight Days. A rodeo. A parade. Fireworks. A Dance. A wedding. NHL Stanley Cup finals. UFC 250 at the White House. And the FIFA World Cup in full swing. Canada hasn't traditionally been a strong soccer nation although that trend seems to be changing over time. Team Canada 2026 is probably the best roster we've ever put forward, World Cup 1986 and 2022 being the only other years Canada has qualified. The upcoming tournament, which begins today at 1 pm with Mexico hosting South Korea, could see Canada win its first game ever at this huge global soccer (football) competition. Canada plays Bosnia/Herzegovina tomorrow at 1 pm, from Toronto Stadium. Japan plays the Netherlands Sunday at 2 pm, which the Crawford home will be keen to watch.

The World Cup, in some ways, provides a welcome distraction from the stresses of our lives and the world's troubles. So does a rodeo, a parade, great hockey, or fireworks. Healthy distraction is a good thing, a necessary thing. Even Jesus enjoyed himself at the wedding feast in Cana (John 2:1-11). Yet perhaps distraction itself shouldn't become a life strategy, particularly for Christians.

When Jesus called his first disciples, gathered his inner circle, it wasn't an invitation to private spirituality, self-fulfilment or the monastic life. It was a call to engagement with the world, advocacy for the outcast, and a servant discipleship reflecting the kingdom or realm of God - his primary teaching topic throughout most of his ministry. We too are called, we are a called and sent people. The Body of Christ. The people of God.

In our Gospel lesson for June 14th (Matt. 9:35 - 10:7) Jesus is presented as being overcome with compassion for the crowds who gathered to hear him, to be healed by him, for they were *"harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd"*. His next move is to gather the 12 and to commission them for service in the world as his representatives, to spread the good news and bring healing to the lost, the sick, the broken. We may not be apostles but we are disciples, and you recall what our Lord said about following him - *"If any wish to come after me, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it."* (Matt. 16:24-25)

This weekend will be one of enjoyment, celebration, and healthy distraction for many of us. Life's giftedness and blessing will be experienced in many and different ways. Joy and hope will be known and felt! Still, our calling remains active, our purpose "in effect". May God's love in Christ be our centre, our source, our inspiration.

*"Lord, make me an instrument of your peace;
where there is hatred, let me sow love;
where there is injury, pardon;
where there is doubt, faith;
where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light;
and where there is sadness, joy.*

*O Divine Master,
grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console;
to be understood, as to understand;
to be loved, as to love;
for it is in giving that we receive,
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
and it is in dying that we are born to Eternal Life."
- St. Francis of Assisi, 1182-1228.*