

Mission: Proclaim the Reign of God

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Perhaps you may have noticed how popular espionage is on film? I'm of an age to remember the highly popular television shows: "I Spy", "The Man from U.N.C.L.E.", "Mission Impossible", "Get Smart", "Secret Agent Man", and what of the most renowned agent of them all, James Bond?

Only recently the James Bond series celebrated its fiftieth anniversary. Even as recently as a few years ago, the actress Jennifer Garner was featured as an American Intelligence agent in a television series called "Alias."

What is a secret agent? Well, he (or she) is one who works on behalf of another (say, the director of the C.I.A.) and is sent out on highly dangerous missions. (Of course, not without the requisite training.) The agent works undercover and hopes that his cover is not "blown" due to his own negligence.

He is accustomed to working outside his own country, and for all his efforts he (or she) is handsomely rewarded. Accepting a dangerous assignment is a tribute to the agent who accepts it, no questions asked!

In today's gospel, Jesus sends seventy two of his disciples on a mission. They are laboring for Him. Their task is not an easy one. Our Lord said, "Behold, I send you out like a lamb among wolves." According to one biblical scholar, the Lord commissioned them while in the region of Samaria, which proved to be extremely hostile to our Christ's message once he set foot on Samaritan soil.

But unlike the Secret Agent, Christ's disciples must be public persons, true to their identity as ambassadors of Christ. He (or she) must accept ill treatment, persecution, rejection, even death if Our Blessed Lord's message is not received favorably and is met with violence.

Would it be unseemly to say that Christians are agents, who are working on behalf of a Higher Intelligence, Jesus Christ? Are not Christians, particularly in our region, working in a foreign territory, in which more and more people are indifferent or downright hostile to His Church?

But let us remind ourselves of two things: The Lamb (Christ) has triumphed over the wolf (Satan) and the names of Jesus' disciples are written in heaven. (Lk. 10:9).

To be called by the Lord to carry out his mission of proclaiming the reign of God is a great honor for us, his unworthy servants. Let us pray that we may be up to the task by living a life worthy of our vocation as Christians.

Amen.