

### **Thoughts on the Daily Word**

14<sup>th</sup> Week of the Year. *Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> July. Readings: Hosea 10:1-3,7-8,12; Psalm 104; Matthew 10:1-7.*

The dominant need in the ancient world was for fertility. Dependent as they were on crops and animals, all relying on rain, meant that anything or anyone who could secure that need was considered vital and even god-like. We know how our food is dependent on workers to harvest the food we grow and just how much that leaves us dependent on the world supply of food. Small changes can suddenly make a big difference. The Israelites are seduced by their neighbours to turn toward all kinds of fertility gods, usually called baals. When all goes well these fertility gods offer a whole lifestyle of sensuousness and greed. When disaster strikes, they turn on each other resulting in political instability and violence. Their duplicity draws them to intrigue with Egypt, the enemy of Assyria, their overlord. The result is disaster, Assyria takes revenge and wipes out Israel and deports the people as slaves to Nineveh. Hosea is one of the prophets who challenges their infidelity at its root, faithlessness to the Covenant. Much of this will be used to warn the southern kingdom of Judah that something similar could happen to them, but they don't listen either. When God saves them from the Assyrians, they then repeat the mistakes with the Babylonians, with disastrous effects. This is not just ancient history but a pattern that will draw Jesus to rebuild Israel from a remnant, the Twelve. The Church has to listen to that pattern because it is called to repeat the prophetic call and be prepared to rebuild the remnant. When St. Teresa of Calcutta was asked how she could hope to change a nation of a billion people, she said, 'One at a time'! We are called to the same commitment. God can change the world with a remnant.