**The Archbishop of York, Stephen Cottrell, reflects on Luke 10.1-11 for the Seventh Sunday after Trinity, 6th July.**

Jesus said, “The harvest is rich, but the labourers are few.” Is that actually how it is? It’s certainly how it was then. Is that how it is today? Well, the harvest is rich. I think more than ever before at the moment, we're seeing perhaps a change in our culture, as people are more and more open to the beauty and the challenge of the gospel, there's a thing going on which is being called a quiet revival, where we're seeing more people, more younger people, turning again to the Church and to the Christian faith. And we must be open to this.

We don't quite know why it is. It might be part of Covid, where the whole world, we had to face up to our frailty and our mortality, and maybe there's a bit of a chink in the armour of our worldview where we thought we could live our lives without God. Maybe it's the climate emergency which is filling us with fear and making us realise we need to live differently. Maybe it's all the other horrors that are engulfing our world at the moment, but people are turning back to God. The harvest is rich, but the labourers are few. Well, actually, amazingly, here in the Diocese of York there's over 500 churches and we're planting new ones. Across the Church of England, thousands of churches.

You may think your congregation is quite small. Perhaps it is. But nevertheless, there is a congregation in every village, in every town and every community. God has raised up a little band of women and men who are called to be his presence, bringing his message of peace and hope to the world.

So, it may be better to say this: the harvest is rich, but the labourers seem to have forgotten that they’re labourers. They've just become members of the congregation. They've forgotten that they've been given a responsibility to receive and to live and then to share with others the gospel of Jesus Christ. And yeah, there may be a few of you in your congregation, but you're part of this much bigger thing: the Diocese of York, the Church of England, the one holy, catholic and apostolic Church of Jesus Christ.

This year is the 1700th anniversary of the Nicene Creed, you know that creed, ‘We believe’ that we say Sunday by Sunday. It gives us the boundaries and the foundations of what we believe as Christians. It binds us together with the Church in heaven as well as the Church on Earth. We make this declaration together.

Sisters and brothers, people of the Diocese of York, the harvest is rich, and you are the labourers. And I pray that you will receive the encouragement, the equipping you need, through all the other things we're doing with the Rhythm of Life, with Revitalise, with the other programmes in the diocese, so that you can be part of God's mission of love to our needy, needy world.

Bless you in your life and ministry. Amen.