

Twelfth Sunday in Ordinary Time – June 25, 2017 – Good Shepherd Parish

Scripture Reading: Jer 20:10-13

Jeremiah said: "I hear the whisperings of many: 'Terror on every side! Denounce! let us denounce him!' All those who were my friends are on the watch for any misstep of mine. 'Perhaps he will be trapped; then we can prevail, and take our vengeance on him.' But the LORD is with me, like a mighty champion: my persecutors will stumble, they will not triumph. In their failure they will be put to utter shame, to lasting, unforgettable confusion. O LORD of hosts, you who test the just, who probe mind and heart, let me witness the vengeance you take on them, for to you I have entrusted my cause. Sing to the LORD, praise the LORD, for he has rescued the life of the poor from the power of the wicked!"

Responsorial Psalm: 69:8-10, 14, 17, 33-35

R. (14c) **Lord, in your great love, answer me.**

For your sake I bear insult,
and shame covers my face.
I have become an outcast to my brothers,
a stranger to my children,
Because zeal for your house consumes me,
and the insults of those who blaspheme you fall upon me.

R. **Lord, in your great love, answer me.**

I pray to you, O LORD,
for the time of your favor, O God!
In your great kindness answer me
with your constant help.
Answer me, O LORD, for bounteous is your kindness;
in your great mercy turn toward me.

R. **Lord, in your great love, answer me.**

"See, you lowly ones, and be glad;
you who seek God, may your hearts revive!
For the LORD hears the poor,
and his own who are in bonds he spurns not.
Let the heavens and the earth praise him,
the seas and whatever moves in them!"

R. **Lord, in your great love, answer me.**

Scripture Reading: Rom 5:12-15

Brothers and sisters: Through one man sin entered the world, and through sin, death, and thus death came to all men, inasmuch as all sinned — for up to the time of the law, sin was in the world, though sin is not accounted when there is no law. But death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who did not sin after the pattern of the trespass of Adam, who is the type of the one who was to come.

But the gift is not like the transgression. For if by the transgression of the one the many died, how much more did the grace of God and the gracious gift of the one man Jesus Christ overflow for the many.

Gospel: Mt 10:26-33

Jesus said to the Twelve: "Fear no one. Nothing is concealed that will not be revealed, nor secret that will not be known. What I say to you in the darkness, speak in the light; what you hear whispered, proclaim on the housetops. And do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather, be afraid of the one who can destroy both soul and body in Gehenna. Are not two sparrows sold for a small coin? Yet not one of them falls to the ground without your Father's knowledge. Even all the hairs of your head are counted. So do not be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows. Everyone who acknowledges me before others I will acknowledge before my heavenly Father. But whoever denies me before others, I will deny before my heavenly Father."

PARISH MISSION PRAYER 2017

Heavenly Father, we give You thanks and praise for the blessings You have bestowed on us and on our Good Shepherd Parish. We ask that You send Your Holy Spirit upon us to prepare our hearts and minds for the upcoming Parish Mission. May we be a warm, welcoming community and loving witness to those returning home and to those visiting.

We ask Your blessings upon Fr. Leo Almazan as he prepares to lead us in Your Word. May all who attend be filled with Your Holy Spirit that they may go into the community sharing Your love, Your message and Your joy with their neighbors. We ask this through Your Son, Our Lord, Jesus Christ. Amen

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INVITATION TO PRAY

Pause for a few moments of silence and enter more deeply into the presence of God.

Proclaim the Scriptures out loud.

As you listen to the scriptures be attentive to a word, a phrase, a question, an image, or a feeling that emerges. Reflect on this quietly or share it aloud.

INVITATION TO REFLECT

Sunday's Gospel is encouraging. Jesus says, Are not two sparrows sold for a small coin? Yet not one of them falls to the ground without your Father's knowledge. Even all the hairs of your head are counted. So do not be afraid. (Gospel). Yet most of us are afraid, even though God loves us in our tiniest details. God is infinite and has plenty of time and space for every person on earth. Maybe if we renew our Easter considerations we can reclaim our ability to receive the love of God. We said that each human being is created to be a dwelling place for God and his love. Humans can never be truly human unless the greatest value in each of their lives is to receive the love of God and give it to the people around them. I realize that culture would never buy such a proposition. On television we see people seeking ease, beauty, convenience, pleasure and so on. Quite often on cable channels and now on broadcast channels, one could conclude that the human person is made for one purpose only: sex. Someone has said that commercials, without realizing it, are built to encourage the seven Capital Sins (pride, gluttony, avarice, lust, sloth, envy and anger). Jot down that list, put it by your chair, and put a mark by each one every time television promotes it.

God's love will move us closer to our goal if we only let it.

But if each of us is created to be a place where God and his love can dwell, then any other fascination we have can be left aside if it begins to take over God's place. So if I am attached to wealth, or my stamp collection, or my good looks, or my drugs, or even my mate—in a way that makes God's love take second (or third or fiftieth) place—then my life is disordered. "Do you mean I have to love God alone and not care about my friends, my family, music, sports, food, health, etc.? I am not supposed to care about anything except God?" No, no, that is not it. Healthy love of all creation is the goal. But everything has its roots in love of God. All things get their own individual value from God's indwelling. Each person, each blade of grass receives its full value of love because it proceeds from God's gentle hand. So we can love them! And live a full human life! I can hear the reader saying right now that such a task is too difficult. Too many things get in the way and we forget all about God—who is our source! Peter deserted Jesus at least three times, and he said, "Leave me, Lord, I am a sinful man." How many times could you and I have uttered the same words? Throughout the ages, God has said, "If you sin, I will not leave you, I will love you." The cross of Jesus is the ultimate statement of truth: that God's love remains constant and dear, in spite of whatever sin there is in all of us and in each of us. God's love will move us closer to our goal if we only let it. *If you sin, I will not leave you, I will love you.* Rejoice. No matter how few hairs you have on your head, God's love does not go away. Receive it.

INVITATION TO GROUP SHARING

1. How can trust help you handle a situation when you are surrounded by "terror on every side"? How can you build this trust? Should you wait for "terror" to arrive before you start trusting?
2. Discuss the fact that proclaiming the gospel brings some suffering with it. If you let your sufferings be absorbed into Christ do you think they also acquire saving significance for the community or for those you love?
3. Why is there risk involved in proclaiming the Word? How many times does Jesus tell you not to fear in this reading? What does he say about the hairs on your head that reinforce the "no fear" concept?

INVITATION TO ACT

Determine a specific action (individual or group) that flows from your sharing. When choosing an individual action, determine what you will do and share it with the group. When choosing a group action, determine who will take responsibility for different aspects of the action. These should be your primary considerations. The following are secondary suggestions.

CLOSING INVITATION TO PRAY

Give thanks to God (aloud or silently) for new insights, for desires awakened, for directions clarified, for the gift of one another's openness and sensitivity. Conclude with the following:

Grant, O Lord, that we may always revere and love your holy name, for you never deprive of your guidance those you set firm on the foundation of your love. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.