

Cycle A 12th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Reading 1, [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, [Ps 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.**

Reading II, [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.”

Happy Father's Day to all you Dads on earth, to Dads in Heaven, Grandads, Foster Dads, Step Dads and part-time Dads, and you who are father figures in people's lives. God Bless You! And Happy Anniversary to Pope Leo. Friday was his 44th anniversary of becoming a priest. God Bless You Pope Leo!

I recently heard someone say: *"God doesn't protect us from anything! Rather, He sustains us through everything!"* ...it stopped me...my first reaction was NO, that doesn't sound right!... I'm constantly praying for His protection for all of my loved ones.

"God doesn't protect us from anything! Rather, He sustains us through everything!" After days of thinking and preparing for this homily, I now humbly agree. Let me explain.

Life is hard. We live in a world where money is the standard of success. It is a world of competition where there is one winner and the rest are failures. The world values possessions and beauty more than commitment. It loves shrewdness more than integrity. It is a fractured world where the environment, and people's race, culture and religion, are secondary to the whims of the powerful. And the corrupt aren't hesitant to justify violence and war to get their way. Unfortunately, the chaotic world is mostly deaf to the call to transformation and love...or if it does hear, too often it rebukes and ridicules the person who delivers the message. You know, I have to mention that last Friday, June 19, was Juneteenth, our national holiday that celebrated 161 years since the end of slavery...Our nation may have ended slavery, but we need to recognize how our racist history of Jim Crow segregation and continuing racial injustice affects us all, even right here in Roswell, GA. Life is harder for too many of our sisters and brothers.

In the Gospel, Jesus warns that when we live as His loving followers, we will have to face the hostility of the world because our values and commitment are seen as threats. Jesus says, *"fear no one,"* yet we still experience Jeremiah's *"terror on every side."* In other words, *"God doesn't protect us from anything! Rather, He sustains us through everything!"*

So what's the answer? Life is hard and then we die? No, the answer is much better than that!

Today St. Paul tells us in the 2nd reading that without our faith that Jesus is Lord, the world in many ways is stacked against us. We know it can be filled with sin and death...temptations, hunger, abuse, suffering, evil. But then...Paul said, *“the gift is not like the transgression.”*

On this 12th Sunday in OT we need to recognize that since Easter, each Sunday, God has been revealing His plan for us to face the hostility of the world: During Easter season we learned Jesus suffered, died, was resurrected...and the Risen Christ is alive in our lives! On Pentecost Jesus sent the world an Advocate, the Holy Spirit to help us navigate our lives with His fruits of Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Faithfulness, Gentleness, and Self-control. On Trinity Sunday, we heard possibly the most radical revelation we will ever hear, that surely explains God's plan for us: God Himself is in community...a community of Persons that exists in perfect love...and that we are made in God's image and likeness...and that in Christ we are in God's community as well...forever. God in Three Persons, that is the inner nature of God, that is life in Heaven, and that is us being invited into loving relationships here on earth! On Corpus Christi Sunday, we learned Eucharist is not only a holy sacrament received at Mass. Eucharist is the real presence of Jesus transforming our lives into so much more...He is someone, not some-thing...Jesus is our way of life that transforms us into the One Body of Christ prepared to thrive in a hostile world.

God created us to be in loving relationships. There we discover ourselves and we find the meaning of life. There we come to know who we are when we see ourselves through the eyes of those who relate to us, who come to know us and love us. It's where distant strangers become friends who care for each other. How many times this week did we encounter a friendly relationship? Even brief encounters can be meaningful and loving. One morning years ago, our doorbell rang. Two Jehovah Witness strangers-soon-to-be-friends came to share what reading the Bible is all about: God's Word speaking directly to us, convincing us that He is real and He loves us. We shared our common faith in God...we didn't argue about differences in theology. You see when we encounter a loving relationship, we begin to experience communion with God as His daughters and sons...being in the ultimate God-centered community of the Billions-who-are-One. (Imagine that! And we think Three-Persons-in-One is a mystery!) When we live in

loving relationships, in communion with others, the world is transformed. Who we all are is expanded, broadened, and deepened...and that heals a fractured world!

The readings today and those since Easter Sunday remind us that God loves us so much that *“The gift is not like the transgression.”* He promised that no matter what, He will not leave us, He will always love us. In the midst of our sin, our fear and suffering, we can find strength in this promise of God. We were not created to be thrown into the chaotic world to fend for ourselves. God created us to be in loving relationships. There we discover ourselves and we find the meaning of life. It’s where distant strangers become friends who care for each other.

Why is it so hard to believe that God has a plan for us to face the hostility of the world? As today’s Psalm pleaded, *“In your great kindness answer me with your constant help.”* He is always helping us, but on His terms. He grants us free will...can we give Him free will to do as He pleases? Bad things happening to good people has an answer. But maybe we want God to make a different promise....to always protect us so we never suffer. Do we think God should prevent us from feeling pain rather than strengthening us when we are in pain? Which do we think shows us His true divine love and power? Jesus never said life would be easy...He said, *“I will be with you always.”* ...Surely we Catholics should know this is why since the 6th century we bless each other several times during Mass with *“the Lord be with you”* from the Latin *“Dominus vobiscum”* ...And the response, *“Et cum spiritu tuo”* that translates *“And with your spirit.”*

St. Paul told us *“The gift is not like the transgression.”* God gives us His grace in the gift that far exceeds any gift we could imagine or hope for:

- Jesus is that gift far greater than any transgression brought on by sin.
- Jesus is the comfort to carry us through our loss and suffering.
- Jesus is the strength that enables us to endure any hardship or misunderstanding.
- Jesus is the light in the midst of darkness in the world.
- Jesus is our hope where there is suffering.

Like Jeremiah, St. Paul and St. Matthew, despite everything, we live and love in the world in God’s community with our family, friends and strangers-soon-to-be-friends ...and above all with our Lord...Jesus Christ, who sustains us.....

The Lord be with you...*And with your spirit!*

And, the Church says, AMEN!