

Your Lourdes Sunday Liturgy at Home

22nd Sunday in Ordinary Time

August 30, 2020

“like fire burning in my heart”
– Jeremiah 20:9

This image of a heart on fire comes from one of the Confessions of the Jeremiah – those rare glimpses of the inner life of a fierce prophet. He paints a picture of what happens when God calls and you answer. Try as he might, Jeremiah just can't turn back despite having every reason to flee.

Last week Jesus gave Simon the keys to the kingdom and a new name, Peter, the Rock upon which he will build his *ekklesia*, his gathering, his church. Now this week, a few verses later, Jesus rebukes Peter for saying “perish the thought” after Jesus explained that he must suffer, die and rise. But the Good News is that Jesus didn’t say “your fired” to Peter and drop him from the group of disciples. He was still included as first among equals, even though he would go on to deny him thrice later. Amazing grace.

There are two classic definitions of prophets. One views them as the conscience of the people. Another defines them as the people in the community who provide us with the future implications of our present actions. These two definitions clearly overlap.

But whichever definition they fulfill, they were also human beings, oft times in agony. In her study Jeremiah: Pain and Promise, Lourdes’ Scripture scholar Dr. Kathleen M. O’Connor paints a portrait of Jeremiah as “an anguished man, a kind of anti-hero, wounded, isolated and broken like the people of Judah in the grip of catastrophe.” She also observes that hearing another’s story can be quite revealing and connecting:

“Reading stories of others forces an encounter with realities that can lead to deeper reflection about one’s own reality. In this way, language of a single life can tell the story of many lives and provide metaphors for understanding collective experience.” (Chapter 7: “Telling a Life: Biographical Stories”)

With Jeremiah it gets complicated, for not only do his prophetic actions and prayers mirror the anguish and hope of his people, but he also suffers on account of his people, because they torment and reject him.

Dr. O'Connor views Jeremiah's life through the lens of Trauma and Disaster studies to arrive at insights that may help us in our current tsunami of traumas. She concludes,

"In complex ways, Jeremiah's biography is a work of social repair for rebuilding the community. His prophetic call, prophetic sign acts, and stories of his captivities create a prism through which to see the disaster, explain it, and survive it."

Prayer is all Jeremiah has in his isolation, and today's reading features one of his contentious prayers with God. It's a gloomy night of the soul, where he "turns from an adamant God-defender to a passionate God-resister." He describes what Dr. O'Connor calls "a spiritual compulsion" as "a fire burning in my heart."

Try though Jeremiah might to escape his prophetic calling, he shows himself to be a true prophet, consumed by the power of the divine word....Although his prophetic calling has made him truly miserable, he has never wavered. (Chapter 8: "Survive by Praying: The Confessions")

In our Gospel, Jesus contradicts Peter's no-pain version of Christianity. Peter says "God forbid" when Jesus recounts his future suffering, death and rising. Jesus rebukes him not only with "Get behind me, Satan!" but also with the oft-quoted statement "Those who wish to come after me must deny themselves, take up their cross, and follow me."

The martyred Lutheran scholar Dietrich Bonhoeffer called it "cheap grace." We might call it "discipleship-lite." In his classic little book, The Cost of Discipleship, he writes:

"Cheap grace is the grace we bestow on ourselves. Cheap grace is the preaching of forgiveness without requiring repentance,

baptism without church discipline, Communion without confession...Cheap grace is grace without discipleship, grace without the cross, grace without Jesus Christ, living and incarnate.”

Scholars point out that taking up one’s cross would have meant nothing to anyone before Jesus historically took up his own cross. Some suggest that what the historical Jesus actually meant by “taking up the cross” was that they must take up their “tau” and follow him. The *tau* — T — is the last letter of the Hebrew alphabet. When a person wanted to say he or she had done something completely, they used the expression: “I did it from aleph to tau.” (Just as we’d say, “I did it from A to Z.”) Or they’d abbreviate the statement, saying simply, “I did it to the tau.”

Pious Jews would often embroider the tau on their clothes or inscribe it on parts of their bodies — to show their total dedication to God . It is said that St. Francis of Assisi discovered this practice and often used the tau in that context, leading many Franciscan communities over the years to wear a tau cross.

When this Galilean carpenter called on his followers to carry their tau, he was telling them to be completely open to whatever God wanted them to do, to make God present and working in their lives the center of their existence. He was echoing Jeremiah’s demand that people cut through their religious entanglements and return to Yahweh.

It’s easy to imagine how Jesus’ tau eventually morphed into a cross. Not only was the tau a symbol and term for the crucifix, Jesus’ dedication and openness to God was epitomized by his crucifixion. Knowing the tau background of Jesus’ statement helps us understand that carrying one’s cross originally didn’t refer to patiently enduring some dramatic moment of suffering. It described an ongoing, generous, open and honest relationship with God, a daily quest to discover what God wishes of us during this specific day. Such a quest involves a real death to self and real sacrifice. Many of Jesus’ imitators could write their own confessions and lamentations like those of Jeremiah.

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Prelude: Sing along with The Edwin Hawkins Singers in “Oh Happy Day.”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EfGDvDGE7zk>

Leader: In the name of the Father, [†] and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.

Assembly: *Amen*

Leader: The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and
the Fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

All: And with your spirit.

PENITENTIAL ACT

Lord Jesus, you call us to serve the poor:
Lord, have mercy.

Christ Jesus, you beckoned us to carry our cross:
Christ, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, you invited us to follow you:
Lord, have mercy.

Opening Prayer

O God, whose word burns like a fire within us,
grant us a bold and faithful spirit,
that in your strength we may be unafraid
to speak your word and follow where you lead.
We make our prayer through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God forever and ever.

LET THE CHURCH SAY.....AMEN!

**Readings for the 22nd Sunday in Ordinary Time
August 30 2020**

1st Reading – Jeremiah 20:7-9

⁷ You duped me, O LORD, and I let myself be duped; you were too strong for me, and you triumphed. All the day I am an object of laughter; everyone mocks me.

⁸ Whenever I speak, I must cry out, violence and outrage is my message; the word of the LORD has brought me derision and reproach all the day.

⁹ I say to myself, I will not mention him, I will speak in his name no more. But then it becomes like fire burning in my heart, imprisoned in my bones; I grow weary holding it in, I cannot endure it.

The Word of the Lord.....Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm – 63:2, 3-4, 5-6, 8-9

R. My soul is thirsting for you, O Lord my God.

² O God, you are my God whom I seek;^[L]
for you my flesh pines and my soul thirsts^[L]
like the earth, parched, lifeless and without water.^[L]

R. My soul is thirsting for you, O Lord my God.

³ Thus have I gazed toward you in the sanctuary^[L]
to see your power and your glory,^[L]

⁴ for your kindness is a greater good than life;^[L]
my lips shall glorify you.^[L]

R. My soul is thirsting for you, O Lord my God.

⁵ Thus will I bless you while I live;^[L]
lifting up my hands, I will call upon your name.^[L]

⁶ As with the riches of a banquet shall my soul be satisfied,^[L]
and with exultant lips my mouth shall praise you.^[L]

R. My soul is thirsting for you, O Lord my God.

⁸ You are my help, and in the shadow
of your wings I shout for joy.^[L]

⁹ My soul clings fast to you;^[L]
your right hand upholds me.^[L]

R. My soul is thirsting for you, O Lord my God.

Paul's Letter to the Romans 12:1-2

¹ I urge you, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God, your spiritual worship.

² Do not conform yourselves to this age but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and pleasing and perfect.

The Word of the Lord.....Thanks be to God.

Alleluia [Ephesians 1:17-18]

R. Alleluia, alleluia.^[SEP]

¹⁷ May the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ^[SEP]

enlighten the eyes of our hearts,^[SEP]

¹⁸ that we may know what is the hope^[SEP]

that belongs to our call.^[SEP]

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel – Matthew 16:21-27

²¹ Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer greatly from the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed and on the third day be raised.

²² Then Peter took Jesus aside and began to rebuke him, “God forbid, Lord! No such thing shall ever happen to you.”

²³ He turned and said to Peter, “Get behind me, Satan! You are an obstacle to me. You are thinking not as God does, but as human beings do.”

²⁴ Then Jesus said to his disciples, “Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me.

²⁵ For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.

²⁶ What profit would there be for one to gain the whole world and forfeit his life? Or what can one give in exchange for his life?

²⁷ For the Son of Man will come with his angels in his Father’s glory, and then he will repay all according to his conduct.”

The Gospel of the Lord.....Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.

Reflection Prompts:

Before you begin, behold this rendition of “His Eye Is On the Sparrow” from the Mississippi Children’s Choir.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EfGDvDGE7zk>

Jesus beckons us to take up our cross and follow him.

- What does “taking up the cross” mean in your life?
- How do you react to the idea of “losing yourself” in order to find yourself in Christ? Is it frightening? Perplexing? Impossible?
- How can you make a daily quest to discover what God wishes of you during that specific day?

Mediation Prompt:

In Paul’s letter to the Romans, he challenges the community’s members: “Do not conform yourselves to this age but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and pleasing and perfect.” (12:2)

- Ponder this question: “How do I set about ‘discerning for myself what is the will of God’?”
- Ask Jesus to show you how to overcome the fear of brickbats and repercussions for living and spreading his liberating love.

Sing along with Walter Hawkins and the Love Center Choir in “Jesus Christ is the Way,” and then move into this week’s intercessions.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oaB6cl1sMjE>

GENERAL INTERCESSIONS – August 30, 2020 TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY OF THE CHURCH YEAR

Presider: Loving God, transform us in the living Gospel and give us the courage to preach your Word in our society, as we pray:

Worship Leader

1. For missionaries and all who endure hardship for the sake of the Gospel. We pray: **Renew us, O God.** (ASSEMBLY RESPONDS: **Renew us, O God.**)

2. For leaders of nations and all people of influence: for the creation of human communities where people live in peace. We pray: **Renew us, O God.**
3. For peace within families even when there are differences. We pray: **Renew us, O God.**
4. For the prophets among us who have the courage to speak truth to power. We pray: **Renew us, O God.**
5. For the people of Louisiana and all who were in the path of Hurricane Laura and the subsequent flooding, that they will recover. We pray: **Renew us, O God.**
6. For teachers and students beginning a new school year, especially in those countries where education is dangerous because of war or pandemic. We pray: **Renew us, O God.**
7. For our political process to produce plans for an inclusive future, and the resolve to carry them out. We pray: **Renew us, O God.**
8. For commitments and actions to renew the face of the Earth with clean soil, water and air to leave to future generations to thrive on. We pray: **Renew us, O God.**
9. For all our loved ones in the military and their families, that they be returned to us safely and experience a welcoming community. We pray: **Renew us, O God.**
10. For scientists and public health officials to observe prudent methods in advancing therapies and vaccines to address the Covid-19 crisis. We pray: **Renew us, O God.**
11. For all those who are separated from us by infirmity, especially those listed in our bulletin, and for all those living with HIV and AIDS, that they know our community's care for them. We pray: **Renew us, O God.**

12. For all the dead, that they see God face to face, especially Archie Freeman and Maria Paulina Ochoa de Rativa for whom this Mass is being celebrated. We pray: **Renew us, O God.**

13. Please share any intention you have [PAUSE.....] as well as all our own needs. We pray: **Renew us, O God.**

President: Good and gracious God, increase our faith and beckon us to lean on your everlasting arms in times of trouble. We pray always in Jesus' name. LET THE CHURCH SAY – AMEN!

Then sing or recite The Lord's Prayer.

Lean back and sing along with The Richard Smallwood Chorale version of “Angels Watching Over Me.”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lSacKZebQbl>

CLOSING PRAYER

God of hosts, from whom every good gift proceeds,
implant in our hearts the love of your name.

Nurture within us whatever is good by binding us more closely to you, and in your watchful care tend the good fruit you have nurtured.

We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God forever and ever.

LET THE CHURCH SAY.....AMEN!

Conclude by singing along with “Take Up Your Cross” sung by the Brooklyn Tabernacle Choir.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=77RHISYAD_E