

Twelfth Sunday of Ordinary Time, Cycle A

Readings and Background

This Sunday's Readings

First Reading

Jeremiah 20:10-13

Jeremiah expresses confidence that the Lord will protect him.

Responsorial Psalm

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

God responds to the prayers of those in need.

Second Reading

Romans 5:12-15

Sin came into the world through one person; so salvation came through one person for many.

Gospel Reading

Matthew 10:26-33

Jesus assures the Twelve that God cares about them.

Background on the Gospel Reading

We read today's Gospel in the context of last week's Gospel in which ***Jesus sent the twelve disciples to proclaim the kingdom of heaven.***

In between last week's reading and today's reading, ***Jesus has predicted that the disciples will face difficulties in their mission.*** Many people will not receive them well, even within the land of Israel. Even ***family members will turn away from the disciples because of the disciples' commitment to Jesus*** and the kingdom.

Today's Gospel offers the disciples consolation against this difficult truth.

This section of Matthew's Gospel should be read in the context of Matthew's intended audience, *a Jewish-Christian community.*

The Gospel alludes to the dangers and persecutions that this community has most likely already faced and will continue to face. **To reassure this community, Matthew recalls for them the encouraging words of Jesus that we read today.**

In this Gospel passage, Jesus might be understood as ***putting suffering in perspective.*** The disciples of Jesus are called upon to keep their focus on God. ***Those who can harm the body do not have ultimate power; God does.*** Still persecution and suffering cannot be avoided or prevented. But Jesus reassures his disciples that ***God knows and cares about what happens to his children.***

We might not face the same type of persecution, but we do experience difficulties as we endeavour to live a Christian life. Sometimes we let the opinions of others prevent us from doing what we know to be right. We need the reminder that ***what God thinks about us is more important. We are reassured by the promise that God cares for us and protects us.***

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Family Connection

It is not only individuals who need reassurance about ***God's love and protection***. Communities need this reassurance as well, including the community of the family.

Children rely on the confidence of their parents for this assurance. Parents can help the ***entire family's growth in trust and confidence in God by witnessing ways in which daily family needs are entrusted to God's care***.

As the family gathers, distribute pieces of paper to each person. Tell them to write or draw ways in which they believe that God's help is needed for each person and for the family as a whole. Each slip of paper can then be collected in a basket.

Invite one member of the family to read aloud today's Gospel, Matthew 10:26-33.

Recall together how well God knows your family and thank God for this wonderful grace.

Conclude by praying together for each of the needs identified on the slips of paper.

After each need is read, pray together, ***"God, we trust you because you know us so well."*** Conclude by praying the [Glory Be to the Father](#).

This practice might become a regular part of your family's prayer. Set the basket in a place of prayer and encourage family members to add other needs throughout the week. Perhaps your family can pray for these things together during a family meal.

Glory Be to the Father (Doxology)

Glory be to the Father,

and to the Son,

and to the Holy Spirit.

As it was in the beginning,

is now, and ever shall be,

world without end.

Amen.