

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Jn 15: 26-27

Alleluia, alleluia! / The Spirit of Truth will bear witness to me, says the Lord, / and you also will be my witnesses. / Alleluia!

GOSPEL

Mt 10: 26-33

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew.

Do not fear those who can kill the body.

Jesus instructed the Twelve as follows: 'Do not be afraid. For everything that is now covered will be uncovered, and everything now hidden will be made clear. What I say to you in the dark, tell in the daylight; what you hear in whispers, proclaim from the house-tops.

'Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; fear him rather who can destroy both body and soul in hell. Can you not buy two sparrows for a penny? And yet not one falls to the ground without your Father knowing. Why, every hair on your head has been counted. So there is no need to be afraid; you are worth more than hundreds of sparrows.

'So if anyone declares himself for me in the presence of men, I will declare myself for him in the presence of my Father in heaven. But the one who disowns me in the presence of men, I will disown in the presence of my Father in heaven.'

■ **The Gospel of the Lord.**

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Breaking Open the Word



THE SAVING WORD

TWELFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME / A

25 JUNE 2023

FAITH SEEKING UNDERSTANDING

St Anselm defined theology as faith seeking understanding. As people of faith, we seek to understand and respond to how God's plan is unfolding in our own lives. One of the most difficult hurdles for a person of faith to overcome is coming to terms with the fact that proclaiming the will of God can lead to persecution and suffering. The first reading and the Gospel address this challenge calling us to be steadfast and faithful in times of persecution and rejection. Jeremiah's natural response to persecution was calling on God to intervene and avenge him in the present. When Jesus commissioned the disciples, they were invited to respond in a different way. Disciples of every age are called to trust that our present faithfulness in times of persecution will not be forgotten or go unrewarded.

One of the tasks that faced Paul was teasing out and explaining to his contemporaries how Jesus' suffering and rejection fitted into God's saving plan. What looked like disaster and failure he had come to see as the dawn of a new age. Comparing Jesus to Adam provided Paul with the means to share his understanding that what had been lost by Adam's sin had now finally been regained, and more than regained, through the death of Jesus. God did not avenge Jesus' death but transformed a moment of violence into the most extraordinary moment of grace. Disciples are called to not only understand this mystery but let it penetrate our lives in times of suffering and rejection.

Christopher Monaghan CP

FIRST READING

Jer 20: 10-13

A reading from the prophet Jeremiah.

He has delivered the soul of the needy from the hands of those who are evil.

Jeremiah said:

I hear so many disparaging me,
' "Terror from every side!"

Denounce him! Let us denounce him!
All those who used to be my friends
watched for my downfall,
'Perhaps he will be seduced into error.
Then we will master him
and take our revenge!'

But the Lord is at my side, a mighty hero;
my opponents will stumble, mastered,
confounded by their failure;
everlasting, unforgettable disgrace will be
theirs.
But you, Lord of Hosts, you who probe with
justice,
who scrutinise the loins and heart,
let me see the vengeance you will take on
them,
for I have committed my cause to you.
Sing to the Lord,
praise the Lord,
for he has delivered the soul of the needy
from the hands of evil men.

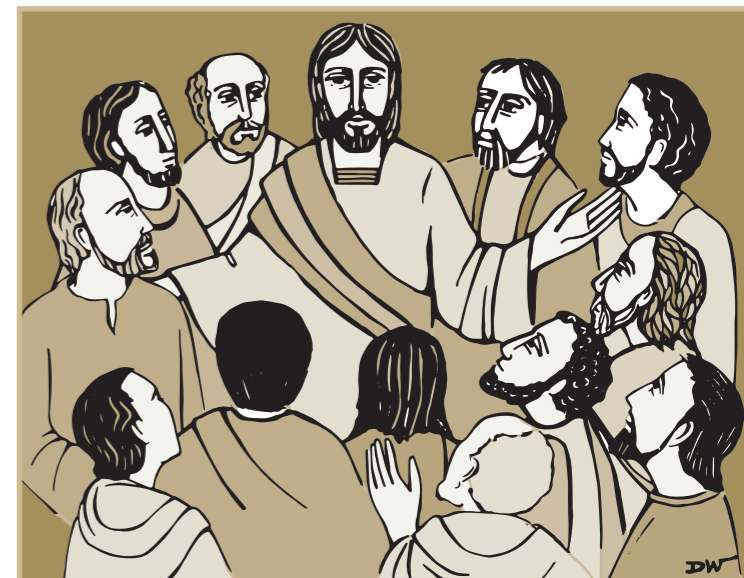
■ **The word of the Lord.**

RESP PSALM Ps 68: 8-10, 14, 17, 33-35. R. v. 14

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

1. It is for you that I suffer taunts, / that
shame covers my face, / that I have become
a stranger to my brothers, / an alien to my
own mother's sons. / I burn with zeal for your
house / and taunts against you fall on me. **R.**

2. This is my prayer to you, / my prayer for
your favour. / In your great love, answer me,
O God, / with your help that never fails: /
Lord, answer, for your love is kind; / in your
compassion, turn towards me. **R.**



3. The poor when they see it will be glad / and
God-seeking hearts will revive; / for the Lord
listens to the needy; / and does not spurn his
servants in their chains. / Let the heavens and
the earth give him praise, / the sea and all its
living creatures. **R.**

SECOND READING

Rom 5: 12-15

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the
Romans.

God's gift to us is nothing like our sin against him.

Sin entered the world through one man, and
through sin death, and thus death has spread
through the whole human race because everyone
has sinned. Sin existed in the world long before
the Law was given. There was no law and so no
one could be accused of the sin of 'law-breaking',
yet death reigned over all from Adam to Moses,
even though their sin, unlike that of Adam, was
not a matter of breaking a law.

Adam prefigured the One to come, but the
gift itself considerably outweighed the fall. If it
is certain that through one man's fall so many
died, it is even more certain that divine grace,
coming through the one man, Jesus Christ, came
to so many as an abundant free gift.

■ **The word of the Lord.**