



Twelfth Sunday in Ordinary Time † Sunday 25th June 2017

In England and Wales Cycle of Prayer:

Those who suffer persecution, oppression, denial of human rights

Keynote: Called to the Harvest the disciples are to be afraid

Prophet Jeremiah 20:10-13

God's prophet had a hard time of it, persecuted and attacked on every side, and sometimes he was depressed and down at heart. *'I hear so many disparaging me, "Terror on every side!" Denounce him! Let us denounce him! All those who used to be my friends watch for my downfall.'* But in spite of this, Jeremiah is full of confidence, *'but the Lord is at my side, a mighty hero; my opponents will stumble... confounded by their failure.'* The prophet has good reason for this trust in God, for he knows that the Lord God is the one *'who probes with justice,'* who seeks out the inner nature of man to discover the true motive and purpose. Jeremiah convinced that he has right on his side, confidently sings God's praise, *'for I have committed my cause to you.'* Jeremiah is a celebrity in his own right – one for us to follow persevering in faith in spite of opposition from those around us.

Responsorial Psalm 68 [69] – A cry to the Lord who hears the needy

Letter of Paul to the Romans 5:12-15

'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,' says the apostle, as he continues to speak about justification and what it means to be a Christian and experience what salvation means. There is a universal character about death, and about sin it affects us all. Paul contrasts Adam – the one who brought death, with the figure of Christ, and he says, *'If it is certain that through one man's fall so many died, it is even more certain that divine grace, coming through one man, Jesus Christ, came to so many as an abundant free gift.'* This is what it means to be a Christian – to be alive and free!

Gospel according to Matthew 10:26-33

Instructing the Twelve in how they are to conduct their missionary work, and about the dangers to life and limb that lay ahead Jesus says, *'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.'* Then referring to the cheapest form of life to be purchased in the market place, Jesus reminds us, *'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.'* In our Christian witness in daily life, like Jeremiah in the first reading, we are to persevere – to be faithful to the end, then God will stand by us, *'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.'*

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Note: Solemnity of Saints Peter and Paul, Thursday 29th June 2017 – Holiday of Obligation