

August 14th, 2016 – 20th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Our faith is not afraid to speak about both happiness and sadness. It is not afraid to speak about both virtue and vice. It tells us that if we attempt to love God without loving others, we are living a sham life, a make believe faith. Faith encourages us to base all relationships on respect, particularly within marriages. Faith tells us to understand the meaning of the word sacrifice and to realize that all that is worthwhile from learning demands sacrifice.



Jeremiah was a royal prophet. He was the prophet at the King's court. He should have been held with the deepest respect. But he refused to butter up the king by just telling the king what he and the people wanted to hear. Because Jeremiah stood for the truth, he was berated and mocked. Jeremiah's life should have been wonderful, beautiful, full of honor. But being true to the Word of God resulted in his being treated with contempt. The persecution which Jeremiah experienced was something that afflicted all the prophets due to their determination to stand up for God's word, to stand for what was right and good and true, no matter what others would say about them or do to them. Grounded in reality, our faith tells us that it is also difficult for us to stand for what it right and true. It is difficult to stand for the Lord because we will be persecuted and mocked.

Yet we have to meet the challenges of life, and we have to overcome all the barriers to the truth that society and we ourselves put in our way. This is what Jesus did. He stood for the truth and was put to death. But he was not going to compromise the Word of the Father. If this meant denouncing the leaders of the Temple, he would do so. If this meant criticizing his closest followers, he we do so. If this meant journeying to Jerusalem where he knew he would die, he would do so. The people who first heard the Gospel of Luke proclaimed had to recognize that the strife and division they experienced from all who persecuted the Early Church had its root in their determination to stand up for the truth, to stand for what was right and good. It is in this context that we can understand the difficult gospel for this Sunday and the grim things predicted. The strife and the sword that the Lord's presence in the world will instill results from Christians accepting and embracing the challenges of Christian life. Consider the young people of our parish who will be in middle school and high school this year. Those who refuse to go along with the drinking and drugs, those who refuse to let others take advantage of them physically, will all be given some sort of nasty label. Life would be much easier for them to go along with the crowd. But being rooted in the Lord demands that they be a minority. Consider the parents of our parish. They will be criticized this school year for setting moral standards within their homes. Their own children will tell them that they need to get real and allow them to go along with what everyone else's parents allow them to do, basically, contemporary immorality. Many of the parents of our parish will have to put up a terrible struggle to stand for what is right and true in their own homes, with their own children. But living for the Lord is worth the struggle. Consider our senior citizens.

Their challenge to follow Christ means trusting in him as their bodies and the bodies of their loved ones begin to fail. For so many of our seniors their challenge means being a care giver when they are exhausted. Every day presents a new challenge for seniors to embrace faith and trust and hope in the Lord and live in the Light of Christ when, physically, life might be getting a bit darker. But this is the challenge that draws them nearer to God. Actually, by meeting the challenge of faith and hope they are bringing God nearer to our world. Every day I hear of a new challenge that confronts a parishioner or a family. This family has to deal with emotional problems. That family with physical problems. This family has financial problems. That family has marital problems. All of these challenges of life, all of the daily crises we all face, all lead us to God if we embrace them with selflessness with faith, with trust in God, and with love. Folks, hang in there. Trust in God. You do not struggle alone.

[Msgr. Joseph A. Pellegrino, Shortened from <http://frjoeshomilies.net/08-14-16.html>]

NEWS

CONFESSIONS: There will be confessions in English after mass this Sunday, August 14.

If you would like to be added to our email list please send your contact information to:

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