



Christ in Our Neighborhood

*Baptized
in the Lord*

Prayer

Grant that we may always revere and love your holy name, for you never deprive of your guidance those whom you have set firm on the foundation of your love. Amen

Commentary

1st Reading: Jeremiah 20:10-13

Jeremiah received his call from God to prophetic ministry in about 626 BC, one year after Josiah, King of Judah, is said to have turned the nation toward repentance from idolatrous practices.

After the death of Josiah, Judah returned to idolatry and God's call to repentance through the prophet Jeremiah was rejected. Jerusalem eventually fell to the Babylonian army in 586 BC.

When we stray from good and loving relations with God and with one another, God calls us to repentance and reconciliation. He wants to mend our damaged and broken relations, and He wants us to restore good and loving relationships.

God is love and He created us to love and to be loved. We may not hear His voice through "one crying out in the wilderness", but God calls us in many different ways. Sometimes He whispers in our conscience. But no matter how we hear the call, He is always ready to give us the courage we need to take the first steps toward reconciliation and peace.

Questions

- How have you heard God's call to repentance and reconciliation in your life?
- What did you do in response that call?

Commentary

2nd Reading: Romans 5:12-15

During the Easter Vigil Mass, we hear in the Easter Proclamation, "O truly necessary sin of Adam, destroyed completely by the Death of Christ. O happy fault that earned so great, so glorious a Redeemer!"

In his letter to the Romans, St. Paul also reminds us that just as through one man (Adam) sin entered into the world, so did salvation and the forgiveness of sin enter into the world through one man (Jesus Christ).

We know that salvation is from Jesus Christ, but still may ask, "why this way?"

Why was it necessary for sin to enter into the world, and why did God need to become fully human, suffer, and die for our sins?

God's love for us is so great that He gave us the gift of free will and the choice to do good or to do evil. But through that choice man disobeyed God and brother turned against brother. Evil entered into the world and created a divide between God and man. A divide that could only be bridged by one with clean hands and a pure heart, in an act of perfect love for God and neighbor, and in perfect obedience to the Father.

Question

- Why was it necessary for God to give us the gift of free will?
- Why was it necessary for God to become fully human, suffer, and to die for our salvation?

Christ in Our Neighborhood is the evangelization program of the Diocese of Phoenix.

12th Sunday in Ordinary Time

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Commentary

Gospel: Matthew 10:26-33

Through baptism and confirmation, we are blessed so that we may faithfully follow Jesus and be a witness to the Gospel.

As His disciples, Jesus tells us that He is sending us out like “sheep in the midst of wolves,” but “do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather, be afraid of the one who can destroy both soul and body,” for God’s eye is on each and every sparrow, and He loves us beyond measure.

St. Paul tell us in his letter to the Romans: “If God is for us, who can be against us? For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor present things, nor future things, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Jesus calls us to be fearless in acknowledging Him before others, so that by our actions and witness they too may turn away from darkness and sin and find the true love, happiness and joy in God.

Question

• Do I truly believe that God who watches over each and every sparrow, who counts every hair on my head, intimately knows and loves me?

How do I respond?

This Week's Task

• Take time to quietly watch wild birds this week and reflect on how much God cares for them.

Pray in gratitude for all the loving care that God has bestowed upon you.

Group Prayer

The leader invites the group to pray the following words together.

Lord Jesus, help us to conquer the fear that keeps us from acknowledging you to others.

Grant that we ourselves, being constant in mutual love and striving to understand more fully the mystery of your life, may be made more perfect witnesses to your love in the world. Amen

Psalm

The leader will guide the group in praying Psalm 69

Psalm Response: Lord, in your great love, answer me.

For your sake I bear insult,
and shame covers my face.
I have become an outcast to my brothers,
a stranger to my children,
because zeal for your house consumes me,
and the insults of those who blaspheme you fall upon me.

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

I pray to you, O LORD, for the time of your favor,
O God! In your great kindness answer me with your constant help. Answer me, O LORD, for bounteous is your kindness; in your great mercy turn toward me.

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

“See, you lowly ones, and be glad; you who seek God, may your hearts revive! For the LORD hears the poor, and his own who are in bonds he spurns not. Let the heavens and the earth praise him, the seas and whatever moves in them!”

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

Conclude with an Our Father