

Twelfth Sunday in Ordinary Time

At the beginning of his Pontificate, contemplating the power of Christ and the need for Christ inspired him to say the words that would frame his long and fruitful pontificate and inspire generations of Christians: “Brothers and sisters, do not be afraid to welcome Christ and accept his power. [...] Do not be afraid. Open wide the doors for Christ. To his saving power open the boundaries of States, economic and political systems, the vast fields of culture, civilization, and development. Do not be afraid....” At the beginning of the new century in the year 2000, he repeated his admonition: “Do not be afraid....!” Christ alone has the power to save. Be not afraid.

Today’s readings remind us that no matter how in the dark, surrounded, or outnumbered we feel in the face of evil, death, and sin, the Father will stand with us if we stand with him and his Son.

In today’s First Reading Jeremiah describes his former friends conspiring against him, but also his confidence that with the Lord at his side all their scheming would fail. If they’d kept their eyes on the Lord, as Jeremiah did, they would have been spared their fate. Instead, they suffered death or exile at the hands of the Babylonians, and Jeremiah was vindicated.

In today’s Second Reading Paul reminds us that even though sin had a head start and plenty of time to spread it was nothing compared to the grace that would flow from one man standing up to it: Our Lord. Because of Adam, sin and death entered the world and spread to everyone, everywhere, throughout human history. The dire effects of that Original Sin still rage unchecked in many ways, and no one has a problem seeing the evil that plague the world today. It has become so bad that once again, sin is not even recognized as sin even though God has given us the ten commandments to show mankind how we can turn from sin and back to God and how to tell good from evil. Even with the Law as a blueprint for life, even after God has given the ten commandments, death and suffering still ravage the world due to sin. Adam could have never made amends for the evil and death he’d caused; however, the Father did not leave him, nor us, to our fate. He sent his Son, who wiped away the sins of the world in Baptism and brought the possibility of the grace of God to us again, by striving to live our Baptismal vows!

Trust in Our Lord is our courage,. We all have moments where we question whether the Lord really cares about what is happening to us. Jesus is the

response to these doubts. He came to show us how precious we are in His eyes and the eyes of Our Heavenly Father. He's also our lifeline to the Father. St. Paul reminds us today that the grace we need comes through him, and that grace not only sustains us in communion with him but with the Father as well. We stand with the Father by standing with Christ. Either we stand with Him, or we stand alone, and alone is the most terrible place to be!