

## Commentary on the Readings for June 25, 2023

### The 12th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Today we return to "Ordinary Time," which means time outside of any "liturgical period" such as Advent, Christmas, Lent or Easter. But after the joyful time of Easter we now return to "ordinary time" with a jolt because the theme of the Mass readings for today might be put into the classification of "Why do bad things happen to good people?" which was the title of a popular book a few years ago. However there is an antidote for unfortunate situations and we should take note of this because we all experience times or situations that test us to the limit. Let us take a look at how this came out in the following:

The **First Reading** is from the *Prophet Jeremiah (20:10-13)* who was always trying to run away from God because he didn't want to be a prophet. Also, because he was being persecuted by his own people (for preaching what God wanted his people to hear), he wanted God to punish those who were after him. However, God kept telling Jeremiah that in due time he would see his vindication over his enemies. The lesson that we can learn from this reading is that "God's ways are not our ways," and only when we are patient and wait for His timing can we expect to see our reward. This might not be in this world (it wasn't for Jeremiah), but He is faithful and will not let us down.

The **Responsorial Psalm** is *(69:8 – 35)*. This beautiful prayer is one that Jeremiah might have prayed because it is in line with his thinking. However, the psalmist here recognizes and accepts the faithfulness of God and is willing to wait. In the meantime, he admonishes others to "seek God that your hearts might revive. For the Lord hears the cry of the poor."

The **Second Reading** is from *St. Paul's Letter to the Romans (5:12 – 15)*. Sometimes Paul's theology gets beyond us, and it is such in this passage. But if we are still in the "Easter mode," we might remember that Paul often compares or contrasts the role that Jesus fulfilled against the time and life of Adam (representing all mankind) who, without the guidance of the Holy Spirit and without "The Law," was dominated by Satan, the father of lies. However, the "gift" that is mentioned here is the gift of Salvation that could only come through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is this gift of "hope" that God holds out to all the faithful.

The **Gospel Reading** is from the *Gospel of Matthew (10:26-33)*. This passage is filled with hope and should be referred to whenever we are in one of those "tough spots" that plague all of us at various times. It could easily refer to Jeremiah, who was killed by his adversaries but is recognized as one of the greatest prophets. We might never be faced with death at gunpoint or some other disaster, but we are often faced with serious trials that test us to the limits. This is when we should turn to God for guidance and direction. Something to think about during your prayer time this week!

**MFB**