

12TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

FIRST READING

Jeremiah 20:10-13a

Jeremiah said: I hear many whispering. Terror is on every side! 'Denounce him! Let us denounce him!' say all my close friends, watching for my fall. 'Perhaps he will be deceived; then we can overcome him and take our revenge on him.' But the Lord is with me as a dread warrior; therefore my persecutors will stumble; they will not overcome me. They will be greatly shamed, for they will not succeed. Their eternal dishonour will never be forgotten. O Lord of hosts, who tests the righteous, who sees the heart and the mind, let me see your vengeance upon them, for to you have I committed my cause.

Sing to the Lord; praise the Lord! For he has delivered the life of the needy from the hand of evildoers.

PSALM

*Psalm 69(68):8-10. 14, 17.
33-35. R 14c*

**R In your great mercy,
answer me, O Lord.**

It is for you that I suffer taunts, that shame has covered my face. To my own kin I have become an outcast, a stranger to the children of my mother. Zeal for your house consumes me, and taunts against you fall on me. R

But I pray to you, O Lord, at an acceptable time. In your great mercy, answer me, O God, with your faithful salvation. Lord, answer, for your mercy is kind; in your great compassion, turn towards me. R

The poor when they see it will be glad, and God-seeking hearts will revive; for the Lord attends to the needy, and does not spurn his own in their chains. Let the heavens and the earth give him praise, the seas and everything that moves in them. R

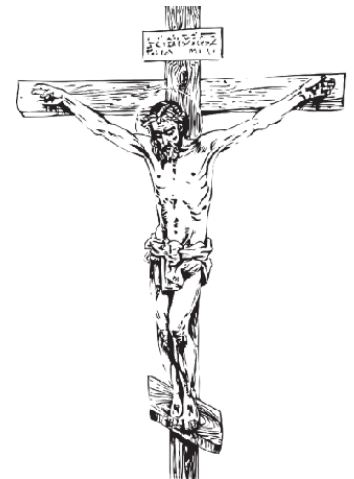
**R In your great mercy,
answer me, O Lord.**

SECOND READING

Romans 5:12-15

Brothers and Sisters: Just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned — for sin indeed was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not counted where there is no law. Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sinning was not like the transgression of Adam, who was a type of the one who was to come.

But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if many died through one man's trespass, much more have the grace of God and the free gift by the grace of that one man, Jesus Christ, abounded for many.



GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia...

The Spirit of truth will bear witness about me, says the Lord, and you also will bear witness.

Alleluia...

GOSPEL

Matthew 10:26-33

At that time: Jesus instructed his Apostles: 'Have no fear of them, for nothing is covered that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known. What I tell you in the dark, say in the light, and what you hear whispered, proclaim on the housetops. And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell. Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father knowing. But even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not, therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows. So everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven, but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven.'

REFLECTION

Fear has a remarkable ability to shrink our horizons. It persuades us to keep our heads down, to remain silent when we should speak, and to trust only in what feels safe and familiar. It is therefore no surprise that Jesus tells His disciples three times in this passage, "Do not be afraid." He knows that fear will be one of the greatest challenges they face as they seek to follow Him.

The Church Fathers recognised that fear is one of the greatest obstacles to faithful Christian living. St Hilary of Poitiers observed that fear often tempts us to place too much value on the things that can be lost—our reputation, our comfort, even our earthly security. Christ gently redirects our attention to what truly endures: our life in God.

Jesus does not promise His disciples an easy path. Instead, He reminds them that nothing hidden will remain concealed and that God's truth will ultimately prevail.

St John Chrysostom remarks that Christ's words are intended to strengthen His followers for difficult times. The Gospel is not something to be whispered in secret but proclaimed with confidence, trusting that God is at work

even when the results are unseen.

Perhaps the most beautiful image in this passage is Christ's assurance that not even a sparrow falls to the ground apart from the Father's knowledge. If God cares for the smallest creatures, how much more does He care for those made in His image?

As St Augustine reflects, divine providence extends to every corner of creation, and therefore no Christian life is ever overlooked or forgotten.

Many of our fears are ordinary ones: fear of failure, fear of change, fear of what others may think of us. Yet Christ meets us in those anxieties with the same words He gave to the Twelve: "Do not be afraid."

The Christian life is not the absence of fear but the discovery that God is greater than our fears. We belong to the One who knows us completely, who numbers even the hairs of our heads, and who calls us His own.

As we read this Gospel, perhaps we might pray for the courage not to trust in ourselves, but in the God whose care for us never fails.