

Homily. 12th Sunday in Ordinary Time. Year.A. 20/21 June 2020.

It's a privilege and a joy to have the hope of the Good-News inspiring and guiding us, a gift that's never for us alone. Along with the gifts that our faith brings comes the responsibility of our Christian calling, to share what we experience and enjoy. This means inviting others into relationship with God and teaching them to live their own lives with us in the light of the Lord's truth. In biblical language, we are both disciples and apostles, receiving and learning from the Lord as well as witnessing to His grace, mercy and truth.

What's obvious to all of us is that some people will oppose, reject and persecute us when we try to fulfil our apostolic mission. Jeremiah speaks to this reality when he said that for his troubles he received rejection, suspicion, disparagement and derision. During his time, one of great change and crisis, what kept Jeremiah sane and secure in his prophetic witness, as it will for us, was his relationship with God and his confidence that God had his back and was on his side. He acted in good faith and conscience, prophesying to the people and to the powerful God's warnings, calling them to a new way of living and a better direction. He placed his cause before God who would deliver him from evil hands, and this, in fact, is what God did.

The events of this year, both nationally and internationally, keep rapidly unfolding before us; uncontrolled fires, epochal climate change, plagues, wars and conflicts, racial prejudice, political incompetence and skulduggery with no doubt more to come. In all of this there is us, a Church, a community of learning disciples, witnessing apostles and inspired prophets, not hovering above the realities of our age, but called

to be in and amongst it all offering God's love and living truth, needed now so much more than even a year ago. In teaching His disciples how to be apostles and prophets Jesus affirmed the price while assuring them of their immense value in God's eyes. His message, and I paraphrase it, is what we need to hear and take to heart; Do not be afraid. The loving Father, God, is watching over you and your cause is with Him. Have courage, keeping strong in the conviction of your faith. In His own words, Jesus message like that of Jeremiah before Him.

A few decades later St. Paul taught Christian people who were like us that sin and evil are ever active in our world. He reminds us that opposition and resistance are to be expected and that imagining otherwise is delusional. But, Paul says, greater still is the redeeming gift coming freely to us through the one man, Jesus Christ, an uplifting gift greater than the downwards force of all human falling.

This gift, and our trust in the Giver of all good gifts, fills us with hope, strengthening us as we keep learning from and witnessing to the Lord. You and I call this gift God's grace, the Holy Spirit living within us and active through us. It's God's Spirit that brings us here today and it's the Holy Spirit that will send us out of these doors, back into our troubled world offering it the Word of light and life in Christ. For this above everything else let us lift up our hearts, giving thanks, as is right and just, to the Lord our God.