

HOMILY FOR THE XII Sunday of ordinary time Year A

Jer 20:10-13; Rom 5:12-15; Mt 10:26-33

Twelfth Sunday in Ordinary Time

My dear brothers and sisters,

Many people today live with fear. We worry about our families, our health, our future, rising costs of living, the state of the world, and sometimes even the future of the Church. Fear can quietly enter our hearts and rob us of peace. That is why the message that runs through today's readings is so powerful and so relevant: **"Do not be afraid."**

In the Gospel, Jesus repeats this command three times. He knows that His disciples will face opposition, misunderstanding, rejection, and even persecution. Yet He tells them, "Do not be afraid."

To understand this message more deeply, we can look first at the prophet Jeremiah.

Jeremiah was not a man who had an easy life. God called him to speak the truth at a time when people did not want to hear it. He was mocked, rejected, threatened, and abandoned by many who had once been his friends. In today's first reading, Jeremiah says, "I hear the whisperings of many: 'Terror on every side!'"

How familiar those words sound. We too hear voices of fear all around us. We hear bad news constantly. We encounter cynicism and discouragement. Sometimes we may even feel isolated because of our faith. Perhaps some of us have experienced ridicule for defending Christian values, speaking about our faith, or simply trying to live according to the Gospel.

Yet Jeremiah does not allow fear to have the final word. Instead, he declares: **"The Lord is with me like a mighty champion."**

What gives Jeremiah strength is not his own courage. It is his trust in God. He knows that God has not abandoned him. Even amid suffering, he believes that God remains faithful.

That is an important lesson for our parish community. There are times when we may feel discouraged. We may look around and worry about fewer people attending Mass, young people drifting from the faith, or the many challenges facing families today. Yet the Lord who sustained Jeremiah is the same Lord who walks with us. He has not abandoned His Church. He has not abandoned this parish. He has not abandoned any one of us.

Saint Paul, in the second reading, gives us another reason for hope. He reminds us that Jesus Christ has already conquered the greatest enemies we face: sin and death.

Paul compares Adam and Christ. Through Adam came sin and death; through Christ come grace and life. Because we are united with Christ through Baptism,

we do not face life's struggles alone. We share in His victory. We share in His Resurrection.

This means that no suffering, no disappointment, and no opposition can separate us from God's love if we remain faithful to Him.

Then, in the Gospel, Jesus gives three reasons why we should not be afraid.

First, truth will ultimately prevail. Evil may seem powerful for a time, but God sees everything. Nothing hidden remains hidden forever. The Lord will bring justice and vindicate those who remain faithful.

Second, human power is limited. People may hurt us, criticize us, reject us, or misunderstand us, but they cannot take away what matters most: our relationship with God and the promise of eternal life.

Third, and perhaps most beautifully, Jesus reminds us of God's tender care. He points to the sparrows. If God notices even the smallest bird, how much more does He care for each one of us? Jesus says that even the hairs of our heads are counted.

Think about that for a moment. God knows every struggle we carry into church today. He knows the burdens we do not speak about. He knows the worries that keep us awake at night. He knows the grief of those who have lost loved ones, the anxiety of those facing illness, the concerns of parents for their children, and the loneliness that some quietly endure.

And His message to us is simple: **"Do not be afraid. You are precious in my eyes."**

As members of this parish family, we are called not only to hear this message but also to live it. Jesus asks us to be witnesses to Him in our homes, workplaces, schools, and communities. Sometimes that requires courage. Sometimes it means standing for what is right when it is unpopular. Sometimes it means simply remaining faithful in prayer, attending Mass regularly, forgiving someone who has hurt us, or reaching out to someone who feels forgotten.

The world does not need more fearful Christians. The world needs joyful and courageous disciples who trust that God is with them.

Today, let us place our fears before the Lord. Let us ask for the faith of Jeremiah, who trusted God in the midst of opposition; the confidence of Saint Paul, who believed in the victory of Christ; and the courage of the Apostles, who proclaimed the Gospel despite every obstacle.

May we leave this church today with those words of Jesus echoing in our hearts: **"Do not be afraid. You are worth more than many sparrows."**

Amen.