



# Bringing Home the Word

Twelfth Sunday in Ordinary Time (A)

June 25, 2023

## Fear Not!

Sr. Dianne Bergant, CSA

Easier said than done! There is so much to be afraid of today: war, the loss of life and the resulting devastation, unemployment and poverty, illness and the pain and diminishment, the threat of ecological collapse, to say nothing of personal anxiety and trauma. The readings for this Sunday all speak of the hardships that loom over every life.

But these hardships are not the last word. Jeremiah ends his announcement of gloom on a positive note: "Praise the Lord, / For he has rescued the life of the poor / from the power of the evildoers!"

## Sunday Readings

### Jeremiah 20:10-13

The Lord is with me, like a mighty champion: my persecutors will stumble, they will not prevail.

### Romans 5:12-15

If by that one person's transgression the many died, how much more did the grace of God...overflow.

### Matthew 10:26-33

[Jesus said,] "Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather, be afraid of the one who can destroy both soul and body in Gehenna."

(Jeremiah 20:13). The psalm of lament picks up the same message: "the Lord hears the poor" (Psalm 69:34). Saint Paul insists that sin and death don't win: "... How much more did the grace of God... overflow for the many" (Romans 5:15). Caught in the throes of misfortune, people cry out—but God responds.

It is in the Gospel that the reassurance of God's care unfolds. The struggles described there are real, but they will not last. The imagery employed to characterize God's care is picturesque and extraordinarily tender. If God is attentive to the lowly sparrows, how much more will God be attentive to us? Even more personally, God knows us so well that the very hairs on our head are counted. The admonition here is clear: Never fear! If catastrophes threaten, don't be afraid! Even if they engulf you or carry you away, don't be afraid. It is only temporary. God is always there, attentive to our needs, so fear not! †

**Caught in the throes of misfortune, people cry out—but God responds.**



## A Word from Pope Francis

Besides [sending us out] as "sheep in the midst of wolves," the Lord...sends us out as sentinels in the midst of people who do not want to be woken from their worldly lethargy... [I]f we proclaim the Words of the Gospel, this is bothersome and they will look at us unkindly.

ANGELUS, JUNE 25, 2017



## REFLECTION QUESTIONS



- When you are frightened, can you pray for trust in God's loving care?
- What might you do to change, even slightly, what frightens you?

# Only Six Months Until Christmas!

Paige Byrne Shortal

Yesterday the Church celebrated another Nativity—the birth of Jesus’ cousin John, as in John the Baptist, the Prophet, the Forerunner. But before all that, John is the miracle baby – a child born of elderly Zechariah and Elizabeth who, until now, have lived with the “disgrace” of barrenness.

The Scripture says that when the Angel Gabriel, that Announcer of Miracle Babies, told Zechariah he was to have a son, Zechariah, no doubt thinking of his wife of advancing years and his own white hair, said, in effect, “I don’t think so.” His doubt rendered him mute. If you think about it, this is what doubt does. Doubt stifles our joy with suspicion, curbs our celebration with caution, strangles our proclamation of the Good News with, “Hold on just a minute, let’s be realistic, you can’t really expect me to believe that!”

Zechariah had just heard the answer to his prayers. As a couple they had certainly prayed for children and their childlessness was one of the great sorrows of their long life together. But when heart’s desire is finally realized, sometimes we don’t believe it.

We pray and pray for the Messiah to come and he says, “Here I am!” and we don’t believe him. We pray and pray for



peace or for love or for fulfillment or for the chance to make a difference in this world and God says, “OK, here’s what you can do!” and we ignore him.

Sometimes heart’s desire is disguised as losing a job or not getting the promotion, passing the test, winning the race. Sometimes what we really want is contained within a “No” from God and it is then that we must have the courage to say “Yes” to God’s “No” because hidden in that “No” is the “Yes!” we’ve been waiting for.

When the unexpected happens, even the unwelcome unexpected, we should be listening hard for the messenger’s voice. A miracle birth is about to take place – maybe inside you. †

## “Lord, What Shall I Do?”

Gary Lauenstein, CSsR,

After working with the Redemptorist novices of North America, I wish every Catholic young person had the opportunity to make a lay novitiate—six months of learning about the spiritual life and methods of prayer, and reading the great classic writings of the Catholic tradition. They would learn about themselves by looking at their family background and their relationships and, especially, by writing a spiritual autobiography about their relationship with Christ throughout their lives.

Fortunately, much of what can be accomplished in a novitiate can also be accomplished through a program of regular spiritual direction. For a young person looking to discover what God really wants of him or her, a year-long program of weekly meetings with a spiritual director is a step in the right direction. Just be sure to start with the right question: “Lord, what do you want me to do?” †



*Powerful God, we ask for your protection and for the courage to face the trials of this life as disciples of your Son, our Lord Jesus. We pray always in his name. Amen.*

The Redemptorists

**Sometimes when our heart’s desire is finally realized, we don’t believe it.**

## WEEKDAY READINGS

June 26–July 1

### Monday, Weekday:

Gn 12:1–9 / Mt 7:1–5

### Tuesday, Weekday:

Gn 13:2, 5–18 / Mt 7:6, 12–14

### Wednesday, St. Irenaeus:

Gn 15:1–12, 17–18 / Mt 7:15–20

### Thursday, Sts. Peter and Paul:

Acts 12:1–11 / 2 Tm 4:6–8, 17–18 / Mt 16:13–19

### Friday, Weekday:

Gn 17:1, 9–10, 15–22 / Mt 8:1–4

### Saturday, Weekday:

Gn 18:1–15 / Mt 8:5–17

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