

April 03 2020; Friday of the Fifth Week of Lent

<http://usccb.org/bible/readings/040320.cfm>

“Put Down the Stones”

In our first reading, the prophet Jeremiah is threatened by former friends who resent his doomsday prophecy and words calling them to repentance from their worship of false gods. He was abused, ignored, ridiculed by all. He would eventually be stoned to death and, in 597 BC, Jerusalem would find themselves defeated by the Babylonians and in exile.



In our Gospel, Jesus is increasingly being threatened, ridiculed, and maligned. Today, *“The Jews picked up rocks to stone Jesus”* for claiming to be the Son of God. It was not yet the appropriate time, so He *“escaped from their power.”* But soon He would be crucified and, in 70 AD, Jerusalem would again be crushed and their temple destroyed, this time by the Romans.

We often don’t like to be told we are in need of repentance, in need of change, in need of a more humble obedience to

God. “A lot of other people” sure need to(!), but we the pious, not so much. And we are quick to grab stones when the message is not one we want to hear.

In the stresses of life, it is easy for us to succumb to attacking one another. Do we really trust the Good Shepherd is in control? Then today, let us put down our stones and turn to God with ever more fervent hearts. As the Psalmist writes, *“In my distress I called upon the Lord... my rock of refuge, my shield, the horn of my salvation... and he heard my voice.”*