

2020 August 30

Twenty-second Sunday of the Ordinary Time

Readings:

First Reading: Jeremiah 20.7-9, "I have become a laughingstock all day long" (7c)

The Psalm 63, "In the shadow of your wings, I sing for joy" (7b)

Second Reading: Romans 12.1-2, "Be transformed by the renewing of your minds" (2b)

The Gospel: Mathew 16.21-27, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me" (23a)

Think differently

St. Paul advises the Romans not to be conformed to this world, but be transformed by renewing of minds, leading the discernment of God will. (Romans 12.2) Jesus chastises Peter for thinking not as God does, but as humans do. (Matthew 16.23) Jeremiah 'accuses' God for enticing and overpowering him. (Jeremiah 20.7) In other words, Prophet Jeremiah is thinking like humans and fails to get into the mind of God to know his will and do accordingly.

To think like God, to discern his will, to tune our minds according to his promptings, all these are difficult tasks for humans living their everyday life with the uncertainties of this world. Jeremiah is called to be the prophet of God against his own will and desire. Peter after confessing Jesus as the "Christ, the Son of the living God" and after being installed by Jesus as the chieftain to head and lead his Church (Matthew 16. 17-19), could not think of and allow this Jesus, the Christ, and Son of the living God, to suffer torture leading to death. Peter could not at that time understand what Jesus said about himself that he would be raised up on the third day. Resurrection at that time was totally an unintelligible concept for Peter and his company. He failed to understand and connect death as a sure and unavoidable pre-condition for resurrection.

Though we claim to be confessing Jesus and his resurrection after the event happened and believing in his promise of raising up our bodies, we have apprehensions and doubts on '*this resurrection thing!*' That is human and understandable. Jesus to the disciples, God to Jeremiah and Paul to the Romans, all are asking to change the human mindset and enter into that of God, and be transformed by the Spirit of God! Finally, only God can put this mindset in us. That is what Jesus said complimenting Peter for his confession of Jesus as the Christ, "*Flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven*" (Matthew 16.17). Yes, indeed God must work in us to put us into his mindset.

That is what we pray today in the Collect, the opening prayer of the liturgy, "God, giver of every good gift, put into our hearts the love of your name, so that, by deepening our sense of reverence, you may nurture in us what is good and, by your watchful care, keep safe what you have nurtured." (The Roman Missal, 2011, page 458)

Fr. George

