

Our Lady of Perpetual Help

Reflecting On Sunday's Readings

THE TWENTIETH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME—AUGUST 18, 2019

First Reading — Jeremiah 38:4-6, 8-10 4

Then the princes said to the king, "Let this man be put to death, for he is weakening the hands of the soldiers who are left in this city, and the hands of all the people, by speaking such words to them. For this man is not seeking the welfare of this people, but their harm." ⁵ King Zedekiah said, "Behold, he is in your hands; for the king can do nothing against you." ⁶ So they took Jeremiah and cast him into the cistern of Malchiah, the king's son, which was in the court of the guard, letting Jeremiah down by ropes. And there was no water in the cistern, but only mire, and Jeremiah sank in the mire.... ⁸ Ebed-melech went from the king's house and said to the king, ⁹ "My lord the king, these men have done evil in all that they did to Jeremiah the prophet by casting him into the cistern; and he will die there of hunger, for there is no bread left in the city." ¹⁰ Then the king commanded Ebed-melech, the Ethiopian, "Take three men with you from here, and lift Jeremiah the prophet out of the cistern before he dies."

Responsorial Psalm PS 40:2, 3, 4, 18

R. (14b) **Lord, come to my aid!**

I have waited, waited for the LORD,
and he stooped toward me.

R. **Lord, come to my aid!**

The LORD heard my cry.

He drew me out of the pit of destruction,
out of the mud of the swamp;
he set my feet upon a crag;
he made firm my steps.

R. **Lord, come to my aid!**

And he put a new song into my mouth,
a hymn to our God.

Many shall look on in awe
and trust in the LORD.

R. **Lord, come to my aid!**

Though I am afflicted and poor,
yet the LORD thinks of me.

You are my help and my deliverer;

O my God, hold not back!

R. **Lord, come to my aid!**

Second Reading — Hebrews 12:1-4

Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, ²looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

³ Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted. ⁴ In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood.

Gospel Reading — Luke 12:49-53 49

"I came to cast fire upon the earth; and would that it were already kindled! ⁵⁰ I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how I am constrained until it is accomplished! ⁵¹ Do you think that I have come to give peace on earth? No, I tell you, but rather division; ⁵² for henceforth in one house there will be five divided, three against two and two against three; ⁵³ they will be divided, father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against her mother, mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.

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INVITATION TO PRAY

Pause for a few moments of silence and enter more deeply into the presence of God...

Proclaim the Scriptures out loud

As you listen to the scriptures be attentive to a word, a phrase, a question, an image, or a feeling that emerges. Reflect on this quietly or share it aloud.

INVITATION TO REFLECT

INVITATION TO GROUP SHARING

First Reading — Jeremiah 38:4-6, 8-10 4

1. Put yourself in Ebed-melech's sandals. What pressures did he face and what options were available to him before speaking out on Jeremiah's behalf.

Second Reading — Hebrews 12:1-4

2. What reasons can you find in this passage for remaining faithful to Christ in the face of hostility?

Gospel Reading — Luke 12:49-53 49

3. To what does "I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how I am constrained until it is accomplished!" refer?
4. How have you seen the Gospel divide people?
5. Give some examples of how we sometimes, in our discomfort with division, improperly endeavor to minimize division.
6. How would you describe the essential elements of the message that creates division and reaction?

INVITATION TO ACT

Determine a specific action (individual or group) that flows from your sharing. When choosing an individual action, determine what you will do and share it with the group. When choosing a group action, determine who will take responsibility for different aspects of the action. These should be your primary considerations.

CLOSING INVITATION TO PRAY

Give thanks to God (aloud or silently) for new insights, for desires awakened, for directions clarified, for the gift of one another's openness and sensitivity. Conclude with a final prayer.