

Third Sunday after Pentecost

For the word of the Lord has become for me a reproach and derision all day long. If I say, “I will not mention him, or speak any more in his name,” then within me there is something like a burning fire shut up in my bones; I am weary with holding it in, and I cannot. The Lord is with me like a dread warrior; therefore, my persecutors will stumble, and they will not prevail. (Jer 20:8b-9, 11a)

Dear Friends:

A reasonable assumption is that the prophet Jeremiah authored the book that bears his name during the 7th c. BCE. Yet, we read it from beginning to end and find it full of bits and pieces, confusingly ordered, and oddly biographical—if indeed that was his intent. Then we recall that the prophets were first of all teachers and preachers; writing would not have been their primary means of communication.

Jeremiah himself became *persona non grata* within both the religious and the political spheres during his ministry. His so-called Temple Sermon (ch. 7, 26) appears to have generated this resentment. Unable to continue his preaching ministry, and with the confiscation and destruction of his writings, perhaps he re-creates the material, dictating it to Baruch and depending on him for its memorialization in a new scroll.

However the book comes down to us today, it is unusually revealing as to the inner conflict of the prophet, a situation that can afflict any believer from time to time. “The word of the Lord has become for [him] a reproach”; he will not “speak any more [the Lord’s] name; and yet he “cannot” take this path. “The Lord is with [him]”; and it is “therefore [Jeremiah’s] persecutors that will not prevail.” In the midst of the virus contagion and with the possibility of its resurgence, maybe we feel like Jeremiah, the conflict between doubt and fear on the one hand and faith on the other.

Faithfully,
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The Collect of the Day

O Lord, make us have perpetual love and reverence for your holy Name, for you never fail to help and govern those whom you have set upon the sure foundation of your lovingkindness; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Collect for Relief from the Virus Contagion

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, graciously comfort your people amid the uncertainty facing us in the Coronavirus contagion: Mercifully attend to those who are sick, bless those who seek a vaccine and cure, bless our Church and civic leaders as they seek to guide us, and fill our hearts with confidence that, though at times we may be afraid, we may still put our trust in you; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Concluding Collect: For the Election of a Rector

Almighty God, giver of every good gift: Look graciously on your Church, and so guide the minds of Shanna, Dana, Jim, Walter, Kari, Middi, Brandon and Ted, those who shall choose a rector for this parish, that we may receive a faithful pastor, who will care for your people and equip us for our ministries; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

First Reading—Jeremiah 20:7-13

O Lord, you have enticed me, and I was enticed; you have overpowered me, and you have prevailed. I have become a laughingstock all day long; everyone mocks me. For whenever I speak, I must cry out, I must shout, “Violence and destruction!” For the word of the Lord has become for me a reproach and derision all day long. If I say, “I will not mention him, or speak any more in his name,” then within me there is something like a burning fire shut up in my bones; I am weary with holding it in, and I cannot. For I hear many whispering: “Terror is all around! Denounce him! Let us denounce him!” All my close friends are watching for me to stumble. “Perhaps he can be enticed, and we can prevail against him, and take our revenge on him.” But the Lord is with me like a dread

warrior; therefore my persecutors will stumble, and they will not prevail. They will be greatly shamed, for they will not succeed. Their eternal dishonor will never be forgotten. O Lord of hosts, you test the righteous, you see the heart and the mind; let me see your retribution upon them, for to you I have committed my cause. Sing to the Lord; praise the Lord! For he has delivered the life of the needy from the hands of evildoers.

Psalms 69:8-11, 18-20 *Salvum me fa*

- 8 Surely, for your sake have I suffered reproach, *
and shame has covered my face.
- 9 I have become a stranger to my own kindred, *
an alien to my mother's children.
- 10 Zeal for your house has eaten me up; *
the scorn of those who scorn you has fallen upon me.
- 11 I humbled myself with fasting, *
but that was turned to my reproach.
- 18 Answer me, O Lord, for your love is kind; *
in your great compassion, turn to me.'
- 19 "Hide not your face from your servant; *
be swift and answer me, for I am in distress.
- 20 Draw near to me and redeem me; *
because of my enemies deliver me.

Second Reading—Romans 6:1b-11

Should we continue in sin in order that grace may abound? By no means! How can we who died to sin go on living in it? Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.

For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. We know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be destroyed, and we might no longer be enslaved to sin. For whoever has died is freed from sin. But if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. We know that

Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. The death he died, he died to sin, once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

Holy Gospel—Matthew 10:24-39

Jesus said, “A disciple is not above the teacher, nor a slave above the master; it is enough for the disciple to be like the teacher, and the slave like the master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign those of his household!

“So have no fear of them; for nothing is covered up that will not be uncovered, and nothing secret that will not become known. What I say to you in the dark, tell in the light; and what you hear whispered, proclaim from the housetops. Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell. Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. And even the hairs of your head are all counted. So do not be afraid; you are of more value than many sparrows.

“Everyone therefore who acknowledges me before others, I also will acknowledge before my Father in heaven; but whoever denies me before others, I also will deny before my Father in heaven.

“Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth; I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; and one’s foes will be members of one’s own household. Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; and whoever does not take up the cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Those who find their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it.”