

# Read

Jeremiah 20:10-13

Psalm 69:8-10, 14, 17,  
33-35

Romans 5:12-15

Matthew 10:26-33

## LIVING THE WORD

### Twelfth Sunday in Ordinary Time

June 21, 2020



#### REFLECTION

Jesus says to the Twelve: "Do not be afraid" (Matthew 10:28). Later, Jesus says, "Do not be afraid." For the disciples, and for us, these commands are easier said than done (Matthew 14:27). Some amount of fear can be healthy, as our inhibitions keep us safe. For example, while hiking in Yosemite National Park, one might want to get a better look at a gorgeous flowing waterfall, but fear of falling would keep them from leaving the designated trail and climbing unstable rocks. This, though, is not the fear that Jesus describes.

In today's Gospel, Jesus tells the disciples not to let fear prevent them from becoming who they are called to be. Fear, in this sense, is not of God. We cannot control the past or future. We cannot know who will accept or reject us. We cannot decide how other people view us, and we surely cannot decide how others respond to us. These fears, while real, cannot prevent us from living our lives. Our only response to these fears can be placing our trust in God.

God loves us more than we can possibly imagine and cares for us beyond measure. We must accept this reality if we are going to be truly unafraid.



#### ACTION

What are some of your fears, both big and small, and how can you entrust these cares to God? Write a letter to God, sharing your fears and anxieties. Tell God all that causes you worry. Then, write a response letter to yourself from God. Refer to this "love letter" from God each morning, and remind yourself that you can do all things through God.



#### QUESTIONS

- ❖ What do today's readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ❖ How do you respond to fear and anxiety in your life?
- ❖ Who has helped you deal with your fear? How is that person living as Christ for you?



June 21, 2020

## TWELFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

### LECTIONARY #94A

Jeremiah 20:10-13

Psalm 69:8-10, 14, 17, 33-35

Romans 5:12-15

Matthew 10:26-33

## Prepare for the Word

*The following elements may be used by the catechist, teacher, or youth minister to prepare to facilitate today's session with teens. You may integrate this information into the reflection and discussion on today's readings.*

### Leader's Context

Once again Jesus tells his followers to have no fear. All that is shared with us about who Jesus is should be shared with others. We need not fear to share this truth, for it is this truth which sets us free! How we profess Jesus to others is connected to how Jesus professes us to the Father.

**Q FOCUS:** *Proclaim your faith from the housetops!*

### Liturgical Calendar Connection

Throughout the summer months, there are a handful of solemnities that fall on the Church's calendar. One such solemnity is the Nativity of John the Baptist, which falls on June 24. John is an important figure because he was the one who prepared the way for Jesus' public ministry. This is one of three days on the Church's calendar which celebrate the "birth" rather than the "death" of someone (the others being Christ on December 25 [Christmas] and Mary on September 8)

### Church Teaching Connection

"The wind blows where it will and you hear the voice, but you don't know where it is coming from or where it is going. . . . May the Lord grant . . . going forward along the path of the Spirit without compromises, without rigidity, with the liberty of proclaiming Jesus Christ" (Pope Francis, Homily, April 23, 2017).

## Hear the Word

*Use this resource, a Lectionary, or a Bible to proclaim the reading. The book should be held reverently or placed on a lectern. If possible, light a candle that is placed near where the Gospel will be proclaimed. Gesture for teens to stand.*

### Gospel Acclamation

*Use the same musical setting that is used in your parish or at school Masses. Teens may help with music and proclaim the Gospel.*

Alleluia, alleluia.

### Gospel

Matthew 10:26-33

**Reader:** A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew.

**All:** Glory to you, O Lord.

*All make the Sign of the Cross on their forehead, lips, and heart.*

Jesus said to the Twelve: "Fear no one. Nothing is concealed that will not be revealed, nor secret that will not be known. What I say to you in the darkness, speak in the light; what you hear whispered, proclaim on the housetops. And 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. Are not two sparrows sold for a small coin? Yet not one of them falls to the ground without your Father's knowledge. Even all the hairs of your head are counted. So do not be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows. Everyone who acknowledges me before others I will acknowledge before my heavenly Father. But

whoever denies me before others, I will deny before my heavenly Father.”

**Reader:** The Gospel of the Lord.

**All:** Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

*Everyone may be seated.*

## Reflect on the Word

*When beginning the reflection and discussion about today's readings, first refer to the handout for today. Ask teens what they learned about themselves and about Christian discipleship from performing the action for the week and journaling. Ask teens about the readings of the day: What struck them? What do they think the readings mean? How do the readings affect their own lives? Then begin the following reflection:*

- ▶ Have you ever faced persecution for who you are or what you believe?
- ▶ Or, to a lesser extent, have you ever felt judged by others, just because of something about you or something in which you have an interest?

Today's Gospel reading, which comes to us from Matthew's account, includes some instructions for the twelve Apostles regarding their mission for building up the Kingdom of God. The teaching centers on the persecutions that the Apostles are sure to face for carrying out their work in sharing Jesus' message.

- ▶ And what are Jesus' assuring words to them?

He tells them to not be afraid.

- ▶ Does this sound familiar to you?

It should, for throughout the Gospel accounts we hear this message time and time again: do not be afraid.

- ▶ So what is it that the Apostles, and us by extension, should not fear?

There is a special secret that Jesus is sharing directly with his closest friends. It is a message that centers upon the coming of his Kingdom. Note what Jesus tells his friends to do with this secret. They should not have any fear in sharing this message with others. This message is one that will be revealed to all, so they may as well get on board and share in

proclaiming the Good News about the coming of the Kingdom of God!

- ▶ What do you think Jesus is talking about when he says we should not be afraid of those who can kill the body but not the soul, but then that they should be afraid of the one who can kill both the body and the soul?
- ▶ What are some of the things in your life that you may be afraid of which you really should not worry about?

For Jesus, the real concern is that we should not fear the things of this world. Rather, we should proclaim boldly the message that he shares with us to others. The only one whom we should have any real fear of is God, who is the only one who can destroy both body and soul.

- ▶ What do you think about that?

Think about this for a moment: one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit is fear of the Lord. We should all have a healthy fear of and respect for the Lord. Ultimately, however, God loves us and wishes the best for us.

Jesus presents an example of this by sharing about two sparrows who are sold for a small coin. Even though they are not very valuable when it comes to human money, these two birds are still important for God. So too with us; only more-so. God so loves us that God is familiar with every hair that grows on our heads. When we profess Jesus as Lord (go and shout it from the rooftops!), Jesus endorses us before his Father. With Jesus by our side, we really do not need to fear anything. Do not be afraid!

- ▶ Do you find this idea that Jesus presents to be comforting? Why or why not?

## Wrapping It Up

*Consider these points to conclude the discussion and reflection. Integrate the thoughts and ideas that surfaced during the discussion as well as the "Church Teaching Connection" on page 218.*

**What are the things in your life that bring you fear?**

**What avenues are available to you to be able to proclaim Jesus as Lord from the rooftops?**

**Reflect on the notion that if you acknowledge Jesus, he will acknowledge you before God the Father.**

## Act on the Word

### **Proclaim Christ from the Housetops!**

*This activity is designed to help the youth reflect upon who Jesus is and how they can best proclaim him to the world. You will need Bibles, some butcher paper, and markers.*

Divide the youth up into four groups. Depending on the total number of youth that you have, you may need to make adjustments to the total number of groups.

Hand out to each group the following: a Bible, a sheet of butcher paper, and markers. Invite each group to draw a picture of a building on their paper, leaving plenty of room on the paper for them to have space for the rest of the activity (so their building should be small relative to the total size of the paper).

Assign one of each of the four Gospel accounts—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John—to each of the groups of students. Tell the groups that their job now is to go through their particular Gospel and find passages and stories about Jesus that they feel they could proclaim to the whole world from their housetop; for example, some of the miracles that he worked, some of the teachings that he shared, some of the parables that he told, and so on.

Instruct them to then write down these passages (either verbatim or by paraphrase) on their sheets of butcher paper, above their houses. Give the groups enough time so that they feel as though they have been given the chance to thoroughly go through their particular Gospel. When all of the groups are finished preparing their “housetop proclamations,” have each group present what they have found and have identified as Good News that should be proclaimed far and wide. Challenge individual students to commit to sharing this Good News with others throughout the coming week. When you gather again, have a debrief discussion to explore how their proclaiming from the rooftops went!

### **Closing Prayer**

*God of love,  
may we find our life's work,  
continue to raise up your Kingdom  
and may serve and treasure are devalued and  
dismissed.*

*Through Christ our Lord.*

*Amen.*

### **For Next Sunday**

*To help teens prepare for next Sunday's Mass, print, email, or share on a blog or social media the handout found on the next page. The JPG and PDF files are available at [www.ltp.org/lwgr](http://www.ltp.org/lwgr). Encourage teens to attend Mass with family or friends.*