

This Week's Readings

First Reading: Jeremiah 20: 10-13.

Despite the plots of his enemies, Jeremiah affirms that God will never abandon those who trust in him.

Second Reading: Romans 5: 12-15.

Sin and death come to mankind through Adam; freedom and life, through Christ.



Gospel: Matthew 10: 26-33.

Christ brings to the Father the love of all who love him. And he invites us, as he did his disciples, not to be afraid to tell people about the Gospel and to proclaim with courage and pride that we are his disciples, too.

Points for Reflection

1. We are reminded today that to be a true disciple of Christ, to spread his message of love, justice and peace in word and in practice, will be seen by some people as a real threat to be resisted. To be a fully-committed disciple of Christ involves loving others as Christ loves us, but there is no guarantee whatsoever that we will be loved in return.

We are not Christians primarily to be loved and looked up to, but to proclaim by word and example the vision of a fully human life that Jesus taught us. This will mean quite often calling into question the less-than-human standards that often prevail in our societies. The Christian is a "sign of contradiction", as he goes against many of the prevailing values of society. To do this, even in the most loving and non-violent way, can be judged negatively by some and can invite retaliations of hate, bitterness, and violence – and sometimes even end in death.

Examples abound in the history of the Church, and they can also be found in the history of the Churches next to us: in China, Japan and Korea, where thousands have given (and still give) their lives and shed their blood for the sake of and in the name of Gospel values.

2. **Today's Gospel** reminds us, then, that we do have a responsibility to stand up and be counted. And, thank God, many are still doing so. *Everyone who acknowledges me before others, I will acknowledge before my Father. But whoever denies me before others, I will deny before my heavenly Father.*"
3. At the same time, we are assured of God's protection and love. The greatest danger is not the loss of our lives, although some people will be prepared to make any compromise to survive physically. As Jesus says, *"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."*

The greatest fear is not that we may be killed but that we may be seduced into betraying those values on which our integrity as human persons depends. To save our “bodies” at the expense of Truth, at the expense of Love, at the expense of Justice, at the expense of Freedom, at the expense of Human Solidarity --- this is the only real danger, the real death.

4. Each one of us is called upon to give witness to the values of the Gospel, both by word and through example, and that may mean, at times, being a “sign” of contradiction in our families, in our schools, in our working places, and in the wider society. But to be a living witness we need confidence in Christ and in ourselves; we need constant prayer and a firm conviction that the only way that benefits all is the Way of Jesus.

--Fr Carlo Tei

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Kids' Corner

Colour the picture below based on today's Gospel reading.

