

of sparrows.

‘So if anyone declares himself for me in the presence of men, I will declare myself for him in the presence of my Father in heaven. But the one who disowns me in the presence of men, I will disown in the presence of my Father in heaven.’

The Gospel of the Lord.

Reflection

by Dianne Bergant CSA

The demands of discipleship can be very difficult. The strength that is needed to continue on the chosen path despite its hardships can come only from God. We live in a world that desperately needs to hear the call to conversion, but it is a world that is subject to the death that entered it through the sin of Adam. Those who answer the call of God may have to face the hostility of this world, because their values and their commitment to righteousness threaten its moorings. To commit oneself to the reign of God is to challenge the reign of the world, and this can make one very unpopular. In the midst of this suffering we can find strength in the promises of God, and we believe that God is faithful to these promises.

Only half of today's picture is bleak. The other half is radiant with hope. Paul assures us that the gracious gift that God offers us is far greater than the transgressions brought on by sin. This gracious gift is Jesus Christ himself. The gift exceeds anything for which we might have hoped. He is the comfort that will carry us through our disappointments. He is the strength that will enable us to endure the misunderstanding and hardship that come with discipleship. We are called to acknowledge him before the world, and we are promised that if we do, he will acknowledge us before God. There is light even in the midst of darkness. There is hope even in the midst of suffering.

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Gospel thoughts

by Gregory Sunter

Last week Jesus was deeply moved to do something about the lost sheep of Israel. They needed to be fashioned into a people. They needed healing. They needed to be nourished. Something had to be done for this needy tribe.

Part of last week's program for action was Jesus' commissioning the disciples to heal, to cure the sick, to raise the dead, and to heal the lepers—all good steps in the campaign to unite the people of Israel.

Today, Jesus talks about the consequences. He tells it how it is: there is always a clear possibility of being killed. The body could be murdered, but no one, absolutely no one, can kill the soul. Fear is a useless emotion. It generates only more fear. In the most direct language he could muster he tells them, "Fear no one."

The time has come to get on with the business of announcing the good news. The time has come to proclaim the Gospel. What was concealed is now revealed. What was in the darkness is now in the light—and all the other stuff we will hear about in the tenth chapter of Matthew's gospel. What was whispered is broadcasted from the housetops. In other words, get on with it—now!

Do you sense an urgency here? You are right. The disciples were placed under a lot of pressure to fulfill the demands of Jesus. They had no choice. The clock began immediately; fear cannot get in the way. Jesus said, "Fear no one."

Jesus reminds them that the Father who takes care of sparrows will surely take care of them. It is the same Father who takes care of us. We only have to trust, continue making music, and "fear no one"—not even the bride from hell.

22

days to go

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Our Sunday Word

St Michael's Parish, Nowra

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12th Sunday (Year A) ~ Celebration of Confirmation

22 June 2008

First Reading

20:10-13

A reading from the prophet Jeremiah

Jeremiah said:

'I hear so many disparaging me, "Terror from every side! Denounce him! Let us denounce him!"

All those who used to be my friends watched for my downfall, "Perhaps he will be seduced into error. Then we will master him and take our revenge!"

But the Lord is at my side, a mighty hero; my opponents will stumble, mastered, confounded by their failure; everlasting, unforgettable disgrace will be theirs. But you, Lord of Hosts, you who probe with justice, who scrutinise the loins and heart, let me see the vengeance you will take on them, for I have committed my cause to you.

Sing to the Lord, praise the Lord, for he has delivered the soul of the needy from the hands of evil men.'

The word of the Lord.

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 68

R/ Lord, in your great love, answer me.

1. It is for you that I suffer taunts, that shame covers my face, that I have become a stranger to my brothers, an alien to my own mother's sons. I burn with zeal for your house and taunts against you fall on me. (R.)

2. This is my prayer to you, my prayer for your favour. In your great love, answer me, O God, with your help that never fails: Lord, answer, for your love is kind; in your compassion, turn towards me. (R.)

3. The poor when they see it will be glad and God-seeking hearts will revive; for the Lord listens to the needy and does not spurn his servants in their chains. Let the heavens and the earth give him praise, the sea and all its living creatures. (R.)

Second Reading

5:12-15

From the letter of St Paul to the Romans

Sin entered the world through one man, and through sin death, and thus death has spread through the whole human race because everyone has sinned. Sin existed in the world long before the Law was given. There was no law and so no one could be accused of the sin of 'law-breaking', yet death reigned over all from Adam to Moses, even though their sin, unlike that of Adam, was not a matter of breaking a law.

Adam prefigured the One to come, but the gift itself considerably outweighed the fall. If it is certain that through one man's fall so many died, it is even more certain that divine grace, coming through the one man, Jesus Christ, came to so many as an abundant free gift.

The word of the Lord.

Gospel Acclamation

Jn 15:26-27

Alleluia, alleluia! The Spirit of Truth will bear witness to me, says the Lord, and you also will be my witnesses. Alleluia!

Gospel

10:26-33

The holy Gospel according to Matthew

Jesus instructed the Twelve as follows: 'Do not be afraid. For everything that is now covered will be uncovered, and everything now hidden will be made clear. What I say to you in the dark, tell in the daylight; what you hear in whispers, proclaim from the housetops.

'Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; fear him rather who can destroy both body and soul in hell. Can you not buy two sparrows for a penny? And yet not one falls to the ground without your Father knowing. Why, every hair on your head has been counted. So there is no need to be afraid; you are worth more than hundreds