

## **Twenty-second Sunday in Ordinary Time – 08/30/20**

How easy it is when faced with even the simplest struggles of life, not to mention great suffering that we can begin to lose heart.

In the first reading the prophet Jeremiah was facing unimaginable suffering and he showed his own frustration and near despair.

“You duped me, O Lord, and I let myself be duped....All the day I am an object of laughter; everyone mocks me...the word of the Lord has brought me derision and reproach all the day...I say to myself, I will not mention him, I will speak in his name no more.”

Jeremiah couldn't seem to understand his suffering. For many people there's a sense that if one faithfully serves the Lord then He will in turn shower them with His blessings.

This is true provided we understand what it means to be showered with blessings from the Lord. We are not, by any means, referring here to mere worldly happiness.

Yet understanding this didn't come naturally to Jeremiah, not to Jesus' disciples and it won't come naturally to anyone of us either.

In the gospel we saw how difficult it was for Saint Peter to understand that Jesus had to suffer. Saint Peter had walked with Jesus, been taught by Him and Jesus had spoken of his coming suffering on many occasions and still Saint Peter didn't understand.

The radical transformation of suffering was all new to the disciples – it was new to the whole world.

When Jesus began to reveal to his disciples his fate – that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer greatly and be killed – it was more than Saint Peter could handle so he tried to convince Jesus otherwise.

However, we get a glimpse of the importance of understanding suffering when Saint Peter received the harshest rebuke imaginable; “Get behind me, Satan! You are an obstacle to me. You are thinking not as God does, but as human beings do.”

There are many reasons why a person might think not as God does, but as human beings do.

I don’t know to what extent Jeremiah came to understand his suffering, he certainly didn’t have the benefit of walking with the Son of God who came to offer his life on the cross, but he suffered nonetheless. He was tempted to think not as God does but as human beings do – perhaps it was fear that caused this.

Even though Saint Peter was thinking not as God does but as a human being do eventually he did grasp and fully embrace his suffering. He too overcame his fear by God’s grace.

In the words of Saint Paul they both offered their bodies as living sacrifices and refused to conform themselves to the age.

In spite of the evil of suffering, they were able to overcome their fear by the renewal of their minds in Christ so that they could discern the will of God – that which is good and pleasing and perfect.

As disciples’ of Christ we too must overcome our natural fear of suffering. We must refuse to be conformed to this age by the renewal of our minds in Christ so that we too can discern the will of God – that which is good and pleasing and perfect.

But this isn't easy for anyone. Nobody wants to suffer. Like Jeremiah we may become objects of laughter and mocked by many and may even find ourselves on the verge of despair.

We may be tempted to say to ourselves, I will not mention him...I will not speak of him or his teachings anymore.

But if we are going to be true disciples' of Christ then this is not an option for us in spite of the ridicule, scorn, persecution and like Saint Peter maybe even martyrdom.

In order to overcome this age and reform our country we cannot afford to be silent. We must stand up to the lies.

There are many organizations in our country and the world today that sound real good on the surface but deep down are filled with lies.

Black Lives Matter and *Antifa* are two groups that have deceived many but they are not about bettering black people or fighting fascism. They are revolutionary parties that want to destroy this country and its Christian foundation. They are anti-family, anti-life, anti-Catholic and Anti-Christ.

We cannot afford to be deceived. We have an obligation to know who they really are and what they really stand for and speak the truth that can only be found in Christ and not get sucked into the anti-culture raging around us.

So like Jeremiah and Saint Peter this is our time to stand up for the truth. It won't be easy but by God's grace we will overcome our fear and we will succeed.