

12th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME; Cycle – A; June 21st 2026
Jeremiah 20:10-13; Romans 5:12-15; Matthew 10:26-33

Dear Sisters & Brothers,

Ever since Adam and Eve committed the first sin of disobedience the fear also crept into their lives. Before that they had no worries and fear in the Paradise. They felt very secure as God was with them always. After committing the first sin, the immediate feeling they had was the fear of God. So they tried to hide from Him. Once they were evicted from the Garden their fear and worry moved with them always. So the feeling of fear is as old as the mankind itself. Even today no one is free from the strong emotion of fear; young and old, rich and poor, all experience fear throughout their lives. No doubt the security measures are great these days; but the more security devices we have the more insecure we feel. In short, for modern man everything is a big concern and worry and he is not free from the fear any time.

So far when the people of Israel remained with God observing His commandments, they felt secure. But the moment they left Him they were attacked by enemies and they were fear stricken. In the first reading as we heard Jeremiah, is under attack for denouncing the injustices of his time. He often complained to God that he never wanted to be a prophet but God imposed the prophetic role upon him. Jeremiah was always going through the ups and downs of emotions and physical threats. He lived with terror and fear. Ultimately, when he turned to God and simply entrusted his cause to the Lord he became fearless before his adversaries.

Today's gospel is the continuation of last Sunday's gospel. Last Sunday we saw how Jesus instructing his twelve apostles before they were sent out for the first time to preach the gospel. This segment of Matthew's gospel is called the **Discourse on the Mission** and will be continued next Sunday's gospel reading too. Having foreseen his imminent passion and death and also the severe persecution the apostles would have to face in future, Jesus is encouraging the disciples to preach with boldness despite those who will oppose them. In today's gospel as we have just heard, Jesus begins his discourse with the saying, '**Fear no one' and do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul.**' Jesus warned them even the loss of their very life. In fact except John, all other apostles were martyred.

Matthew had very special reason to add this teaching of Jesus to his gospel. For when he wrote the gospel between the periods of 70-100 AD, the persecution against the Christian community was intense and all of the apostles were martyred before 100 AD, except John. No doubt, the apostles and the early Christians were well aware of the

warning of Jesus. So during the severe Roman persecution of 300 years the Christians stood firm, though hundred of them were martyred. In a way they never feared the one who could just kill their body, but could not kill the soul.

Perhaps, America is the most secure country in the world. Our security system and regulations are excellent. Unfortunately, compared to many other nations many Americans feel very insecure. Everything is a big worry and concern for them. The reason is very simple that people leave aside God and totally rely on these devices. But they fail the moment when you need it the most. So without faith in Jesus no security system will work. At the farewell discourse in John the final instruction of Jesus to his troubled apostles was, **“Do not let your hearts not be troubled. You have faith in God; have faith also in me.”** St. Paul had the strong faith in these words of Jesus. That is why he could boldly say in Romans 8: 31 ff, **“If God is for us, who can be against us? He continues, “What will separate us from the love of Christ? Will anguish, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or the sword.”** Friends, Jesus has not promised us a problem free life; rather the cross and the losses. But he has promised us his help to endure them. If we really trust in the Lord we will overcome any situations and finally the victory will be ours. Remember, when we carry our cross patiently, he will become the Simon to carry the cross for us. When we feel at loss, please turn to Jesus and then we will hear the gentle voice, **“Fear not it is I.” It is said, “Locks are manufactured with keys. Similarly, God never gives problems without solutions. Only we need to have patience to unlock them.”**