

CONNECT! SUNDAY REFLECTION

4th Sunday in Ordinary Time | For Sunday, January 30, 2022

Proclaiming God's Wondrous Deeds

Written by Fr. Allison Gingras

Jeremiah 1:4-5, 17-19

1 Corinthians 12:31—13:13

or 1 Cor 13:4-13

Luke 4:21-30



Sometimes it is a struggle to see how each of the Mass readings correspond. Other times the threads between them interweave like a masterfully woven tapestry. Today's readings, at least to me, represent the latter. Strands of being created for a plan and a purpose, prophecies shared and rejected, good people treated as evil, and connected to all of it, a God that loves without reserve — upholding, strengthening His beloved.

Through our baptism, we share the beauty of being intimately known and loved by God. Like Jesus and Jeremiah, we are not only known but also called to be harbingers of the Good News — regardless of the difficulties faced in doing so. Formed in love, the grace of God animates us. His divine indwelling continually elevates our faith. We find the courage to witness to others through grace and never by our strength. When we accept the unfathomable gift of God's perfect love, not only does it cast out every fear, but it remains impossible to keep it to ourselves. If we fail to desire or find opportunities to share the Good News of Christ with others, we have entirely missed the point of what it means to be loved by Love itself.

The Church recently celebrated the *Sunday of the Word of God*, instituted by Pope Francis on September 30, 2019, established to emphasize the importance and value of Sacred Scripture for the Christian life. The connection between the Word of God and the Liturgy exemplifies the importance of incorporating time daily with the Scriptures. Through the Word of God, we encounter Christ. These encounters prepare us to be disciples.

The faithful can deepen their faith and spend time in the Scriptures with *Lectio Divina* (which translates to divine reading). Read, reflect, pray, and meditate on the following passages found throughout today's readings. What threads knit together a more vibrant picture of how your baptismal call to share the faith appears?

"The word of the LORD came to me, saying:
Before I formed you in the womb I knew you,
before you were born I dedicated you,
a prophet to the nations I appointed you." (Jeremiah 1:4-5).

We are formed, dedicated, and appointed, all prepared to be prophets. Jeremiah worried about what he would say, the Lord assured all the necessary words would be supplied.

“On you I depend from birth;
from my mother’s womb you are my strength.
My mouth shall declare your justice,
day by day your salvation.
O God, you have taught me from my youth,
and till the present I proclaim your wondrous deeds.” (Ps 71:6, 15-17)

Dependent, strengthened, and taught by God in preparation to proclaim His marvelous deeds. The Psalmist utters words we can all pray back to God.

“And if I have the gift of prophecy,
and comprehend all mysteries and all knowledge;
if I have all faith so as to move mountains,
but do not have love, I am nothing.” (1 Cor 13:2)

God bestows many gifts, all different, all tied to grace and faith, worth nothing if not bound to love. St. Paul warns us of being clanging gongs if we forget to ground all our actions in love.

“Do here in your native place
the things that we heard were done in Capernaum.”
And he said, “Amen, I say to you,
no prophet is accepted in his own native place.” (Luke 4:23-24)

Jesus, Son of God, the fulfillment of the prophecy, taught with authority and amazement, yet they rejected his message. In love, he continued, even though he knew a prophet is rarely accepted in his land. Jesus demonstrates the truth of evangelization, the ‘why’ for soldiering on despite obstacles and rejection — people will hear, believe, repent, and be redeemed.

Where are you called to share the message? How will you overcome any rejection you may encounter in your family, neighborhood, or community? What can you glean from Jesus’ teaching to proclaim the wondrous deeds of our God? How can you be strengthened by God’s love so that you might reflect that love to others?

Allison Gingras

PRAYER

Lord, may my fears never outweigh
my desire and courage to share
your marvelous love with others.
May I never grow weary or discouraged
as I continue to witness the Good News,
regardless of the obstacles I might face.