

STANDING BY GOD'S WORD DESPITE THE COST

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Today's readings remind us of the cost of discipleship and the courage required to stand for the truth.

In the First Reading, the prophet Jeremiah faced opposition for speaking God's word. Central to Jeremiah's message were prophecies of impending divine judgment as a warning against idolatry, social injustice, and moral decadence practiced by the inhabitants of Judea. Moreover, he told the people to submit to the yoke of the king of Babylon if they wanted to survive. His message was demoralizing to the defenders of Jerusalem and so the princes and King Zedekiah had him thrown into the muddy cistern so that he would cease to speak God's word. Yet God rescued him through an unlikely helper, Ebed-melech the Cushite, a court official. This reminds us that when we stand for truth and justice, we may suffer, but God will never forsake us.

Like the psalmist in Psalm 40, we echo the plea of every struggling believer: "Lord, come to my aid!" This is our prayer when we face trials. God is our refuge, and he will sustain us.

The early Christians faced

opposition and conflict from Jews and Gentiles. Many actually reached at the point of "shedding blood" because of their faith. In the Second Reading, the writer of the Letter to the Hebrews encourages his audience to run the race of faithfulness with perseverance, keeping their eyes on Jesus. They were being surrounded by a great "cloud of witnesses"—the patriarchs and the prophets of old, and the Christian saints and the martyrs who have won the crown of glory. Faith requires decisions, and sometimes these choices create divisions. But Jesus calls us to remain steadfast, even when it is difficult. Jesus endured the cross for our sake, showing us the path of faithfulness, no matter the cost. True discipleship requires sacrifice.

In the Gospel, Jesus shocks with his declaration: "I have come to set the earth on fire... Do you think I have come to bring peace? No, but rather division." These words are unsettling. Is not Jesus the Prince of Peace? Why does he speak of division? Jesus warns his disciples that they will encounter division, within their ranks and even among family members when they choose his

Gospel message and lifestyle. This conflict is illustrated as a fire that purifies and refines. The fire Jesus brings is the fire of God's truth, love, and justice. It challenges us to make a choice—to follow Christ wholeheartedly rather than remaining in the comfort of the world's values. When we commit to Christ, it may create conflict even within our own families, as some accept his call while others resist it. But like Jesus, when we encounter division, let us not lose heart, but remain steadfast in promoting his saving message of truth, justice, and love.

Let us ask God for the courage to remain faithful, the strength to endure hardships, and the grace to be Christ's witnesses in a world that desperately needs his light. The cost of discipleship is never easy; it requires courage, endurance, and faith in the face of opposition. As long as we trust that God is always with us, we win in the end.

THE INTRODUCTORY RITES

Entrance Antiphon

(Ps 84 [83]:10–11)

(Recited when there is no opening song)

Turn your eyes, O God, our shield; and look on the face of your anointed one; one day within your courts is better than a thousand elsewhere.

Greeting

(The sign of the cross is made here.)

P—The Lord be with you.

All—And with your spirit.

Introduction

(These or similar words may be used to address the assembly.)

P—The Word of God speaks of radical choice in following the Lord. Jesus speaks of a choice that may create division. He brings peace but not the kind that the world gives. It is not peace that is based on compromises, bargaining, half-truths, or balance of power. The peace that he brings is attained through the cross and through the purifying action of the Holy Spirit. It is a peace that tries the human heart, and so can cause pain and division. But it is the only kind of peace that lasts, the kind that is truly redeeming and ennobling.

Penitential Act

P—Brethren (brothers and sisters), let us acknowledge our sins, and so prepare ourselves to celebrate the sacred mysteries.
(Pause)

P—Have mercy on us, O Lord.
All—For we have sinned against you.

P—Show us, O Lord, your mercy.
All—And grant us your salvation.

P—May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life.
All—Amen.

P—Lord, have mercy.
All—Lord, have mercy.

P—Christ, have mercy.
All—Christ, have mercy.

P—Lord, have mercy.
All—Lord, have mercy.

Gloria

All—Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to people of good will. We praise you, we bless you, we adore you, we glorify you, we give you thanks for your great glory, Lord God, heavenly King, O God, almighty Father. Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son, Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us; you take away the sins of the world, receive our prayer; you are seated at the right hand of the Father, have mercy on us. For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

Collect

P—Let us pray. *(Pause)*

O God, who have prepared for those who love you good things which no eye can see, fill our hearts, we pray, with the warmth of your love, so that, loving you in all things and above all things, we may attain your promises, which surpass every human desire.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever.

All—Amen.

LITURGY OF THE WORD



First Reading

(Jer 38:4–6, 8–10) *(Sit)*

Because Jeremiah speaks God's truth, he becomes a man of contradiction, a threat to the status quo. He is persecuted by the leaders who only listen to what they want to hear.

A reading from the Book of the Prophet Jeremiah

IN THOSE DAYS, the princes said to the king: "Jeremiah ought to be put to death; he is demoralizing the soldiers who are left in this city, and all the people, by speaking such things to them; he is not interested in the welfare of our

people, but in their ruin." King Zedekiah answered: "He is in your power"; for the king could do nothing with them. And so they took Jeremiah and threw him into the cistern of Prince Malchiah, which was in the quarters of the guard, letting him down with ropes. There was no water in the cistern, only mud, and Jeremiah sank into the mud.

Ebed-melech, a court official, went there from the palace and said to him: "My lord king, these men have been at fault in all they have done to the prophet Jeremiah, casting him into the cistern. He will die of famine on the spot, for there is no more food in the city." Then the king ordered Ebed-melech the Cushite to take three men along with him, and draw the prophet Jeremiah out of the cistern before he should die.

—The word of the Lord.

All—Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm (Ps 40)

R—Lord, come to my aid!



1. I have waited, waited for the LORD,/ and he stooped toward me. **(R)**

2. The LORD heard my cry./ He drew me out of the pit of destruction,/ out of the mud of the swamp;/ he set my feet upon a crag;/ he made firm my steps. **(R)**

3. And he put a new song into my mouth,/ a hymn to our God./ Many shall look on in awe/ and trust in the LORD. **(R)**

4. Though I am afflicted and poor,/ yet the LORD thinks of me./ You are my help and my deliverer;/ O my God, hold not back! **(R)**

Second Reading (Heb 12:1–4)

A Christian must always look up to the example of Jesus in his struggle to be faithful to the Father. In enduring

the cross, Jesus is glorified by the Father. The happiness that awaits us should inspire us not to abandon the struggle.

A reading from the Letter to the Hebrews

BROTHERS AND SISTERS: Since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us rid ourselves of every burden and sin that clings to us and persevere in running the race that lies before us while keeping our eyes fixed on Jesus, the leader and perfecter of faith. For the sake of the joy that lay before him he endured the cross, despising its shame, and has taken his seat at the right of the throne of God. Consider how he endured such opposition from sinners, in order that you may not grow weary and lose heart. In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding blood.

—The word of the Lord.
All—Thanks be to God.

Alleluia (Jn 10:27) (Stand)

All—Alleluia, alleluia. My sheep hear my voice, says the Lord; I know them, and they follow me. Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel (Lk 12:49–53)

P—A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke
All—Glory to you, O Lord.

JESUS SAID TO HIS DISCIPLES: “I have come to set the earth on fire, and how I wish it were already blazing! There is a baptism with which I must be baptized, and how great is my anguish until it is accomplished! Do you think that I have come to establish peace on the earth? No, I tell you, but rather division. From now on a household of five will be divided, three against two and two against three; a father will be divided against his son and a son against his father, a mother against her daughter and a daughter against her mother, a mother-in-law

against her daughter-in-law and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.”

—The Gospel of the Lord.
All—Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Homily (Sit)

Profession of Faith (Stand)

All—I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages. God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father; through him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven, (at the words that follow, up to and including and became man, all bow) and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary and became man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, he suffered death and was buried, and rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church. I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Prayer of the Faithful

P—Father in heaven, your love that we experience through your Son, Jesus our Lord, moves us toward radical choices and changes in our lives. Help us to always choose you above all things so that we may live the fullness of life. Full of trust we pray:

R—Father, help us to be true to the Gospel.

C—May Church leaders preach the purity of the Gospel in season and out of season, even if their message is ignored or rejected because it can create division. We pray: **(R)**

C—May our national and local leaders, and we the citizenry, opt to make choices for the sake of justice, common good, and care of our environment. We pray: **(R)**

C—Surrounded and cheered as we are by just and holy people in the past and in the present, may we persevere in our spiritual combat until we win the unfading crown of glory. We pray: **(R)**

C—In the world of apathy, self-absorption, fear, and compromise, may there be more people who stand up for the cause of truth and justice, and who attend to the poor, the suffering, and the marginalized. We pray: **(R)**

C—May the Lord come to the aid of those who are persecuted and maligned for their faith in him. May he reward with eternal life those who fought a good fight and kept the faith. We pray: **(R)**

C—Let us pray for the urgent concerns of our community and for our personal intentions (*pause*). We pray: **(R)**

P—God our Father, in your Son’s life, death, and resurrection, you showed your love for us. Help us mirror that same love toward one another so that we may become active agents of your salvation. This we ask through Christ our Lord.

All—Amen.



Presentation of the Gifts (Stand)

P—Pray, brethren...
All—May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands for the praise and glory of his name,

for our good and the good of
all his holy Church.

Prayer over the Offerings

P—Receive our oblation, O Lord, by which is brought about a glorious exchange, that, by offering what you have given, we may merit to receive your very self.

Through Christ our Lord.
All—Amen.

Preface (Ordinary Time I)

P—The Lord be with you.

All—And with your spirit.

P—Lift up your hearts.

All—We lift them up to the Lord.

P—Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

All—It is right and just.

P—It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, always and everywhere to give you thanks, Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God, through Christ our Lord.

For through his Paschal Mystery, he accomplished the marvelous deed, by which he has freed us from the yoke of sin and death, summoning us to the glory of being now called a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for your own possession, to proclaim everywhere your mighty works, for you have called us out of darkness into your own wonderful light.

And so, with Angels and Archangels, with Thrones and Dominions, and with all the hosts and Powers of heaven, we sing the hymn of your glory, as without end we acclaim:

All—Holy, Holy, Holy... (Kneel)

Acclamation (Stand)

All—We proclaim your Death, O Lord, and profess your Resurrection until you come again.

THE COMMUNION RITE

The Lord's Prayer

All—Our Father...

P—Deliver us, Lord...

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power and the glory are yours
now and for ever.**

Invitation to Peace

Invitation to Communion

(Kneel)

P—Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

**All—Lord, I am not worthy
that you should enter under
my roof, but only say the word
and my soul shall be healed.**

Communion Antiphon

(Ps 130 [129]:7)

**With the Lord there is mercy;
in him is plentiful redemption.**

Prayer after Communion

(Stand)

P—Let us pray. *(Pause)*

Made partakers of Christ through these Sacraments, we humbly implore your mercy, Lord, that, conformed to his image on earth, we may merit also to be his coheirs in heaven.

Who lives and reigns for ever and ever.

All—Amen.

THE CONCLUDING RITES

P—The Lord be with you.
All—And with your spirit.

Solemn Blessing

P—Bow your heads and pray for God's blessing. *(Pause)*

May almighty God always keep every adversity far from you and in his kindness pour out upon you the gifts of his blessing.

All—Amen.

P—May God keep your hearts attentive to his words, that they may be filled with everlasting gladness.

All—Amen.

P—And so, may you always understand what is good and right, and be found ever hastening along in the path of God's commands, made coheirs with the citizens of heaven.

All—Amen.

P—And may the blessing of almighty God, the Father, and the Son, (†) and the Holy Spirit, come down on you and remain with you forever.

All—Amen.

Dismissal

P—The Mass has been offered. Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life.

All—Thanks be to God.