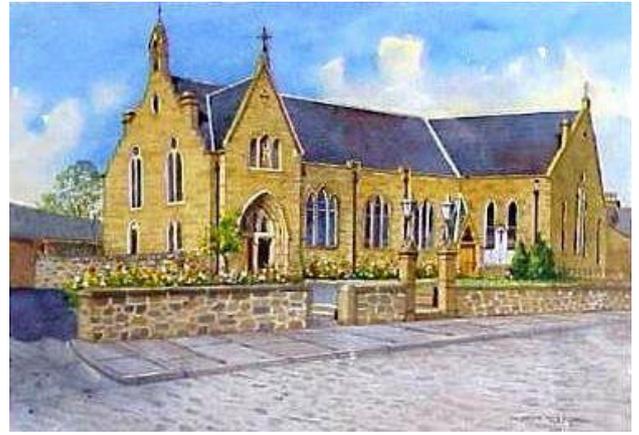


Saint Joseph's Church NewsLetter



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SUNDAY READINGS PERSPECTIVE

Death

The Gospel reading this week is focused on death. In it, Jesus tells his disciples not to be afraid of those who can kill them. Those people are not to be feared, because death itself is not to be feared.

No doubt, there is always something sorrowful about dying, because death separates the dying person from his family and his friends. But Jesus is not telling people to accept death without sorrow. He is telling them not to fear death.

How can Jesus tell us—actually, command us—not to be afraid of death?

Well, think about it this way. If you are surprised when you discover that you are dying, you just haven't been paying attention. None of us is getting out of this alive. Everyone of us will die. It is just a question of when. Or maybe better: it is just a question of how.

Here is how it will be if you love the Lord. In dying, you will move through the veil that separates you, in this world of sorrow and suffering, from the Lord's own presence. There, on the other side, you will find all tears wiped away—the tears you have already wept and the ones that are stuck in your heart right now. All those tears will be wiped away by your Creator with a tenderness so great that you will think you must be dreaming. The beauty and the goodness of that new world will surpass your every desire. And you yourself will be something lovelier than you ever imagined you could be. Surrounded by beauty and goodness, bathed in the love of the Lord, transformed, yourself, in the beauty of holiness, you will join the angels in singing for joy at what the Lord has done.

Are you afraid now? Is this scary to you?

What is worth fearing is losing all of this beauty and goodness on the other side of death because you will not now surrender to the love of the Lord who calls you to himself. But this is a kind of death that comes only from sin, as the Second Reading says. No one else can force it on you; only you can cause this death in yourself.

And that is why the Lord tells his disciples not to fear those who can kill the body.

Eleonore Stump

HOMILY HELPS

- With mass shootings and acts of domestic terrorism on the increase while the “war on terror” continues, we can identify all too easily with Jeremiah’s words: “Terror on every side!” (Jeremiah 20:10). Jeremiah himself continually felt threatened because he repeatedly condemned the unfaithful kings of Judah. Jeremiah constantly struggled with his calling. When even his friends turn against him, he succumbs to doubt and anger. Yet he perseveres in his mission. He convinces himself that with the LORD at his side his enemies will not win in the end. Just as God has rescued the poor and the persecuted, God will rescue him.

- Both Jeremiah and the psalmist are subjected to abuse, even from those close to them. Jeremiah’s former friends “are on the watch for any mis-step of mine” (Jeremiah 20:10). The psalmist has “become an outcast to my kin, a stranger to my mother’s children” (Psalm 69:9). In the end, both place their trust in the LORD. “Sing to the LORD . . . for he has rescued the life of the poor,” says Jeremiah (20:13). “I pray to you, O LORD, . . . for the LORD hears the poor,” says the psalmist (69:14, 34). God’s mercy to the neediest gives them confidence.

- Jeremiah pleads to God not just for deliverance, but retribution. “Let me witness the vengeance you take on them,” he prays (20:12). He wants to see his enemies hurt as badly as they’ve hurt him. Jesus wants his disciples to stay strong despite rejection and persecution. He assures them repeatedly, “Do not be afraid” (10:26, 28, 31). How can he say this? Because he knows his Father’s care exceeds any harm the world can inflict. This enables him to take up his cross when facing the ultimate persecution. May we be assured of God’s care through all our trials.

QUESTIONS OF THE WEEK

When am I unwilling to stand up for what I believe?

What fears prevent me from bringing my faith into the light?

LIVESTREAM MASS

**There is a livestream Mass from St Joseph's today,
Sunday 21st June at 10.00am.**

Celebrants – Fr Greg Murphy and Fr Jim Walls.