



LIVING THE GOSPEL

**Twelfth Sunday in Ordinary Time
June 21, 2026**

Theme: "There is no need to be afraid; you are worth more than hundreds of sparrows."

Gathering Prayer

Facilitator: Grant, we pray, almighty God, that we, who glory in the Heart of your beloved Son and recall the wonders of his love for us, may be made worthy to receive an overflowing measure of grace from that fount of heavenly gifts. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

All: Amen.

Exploring the Word

Gospel Reading: Matthew 10:26-33

Jesus tells his disciples: ²⁶ "Do not be afraid of them therefore. For everything that is now covered will be uncovered, and everything now hidden will be made clear. ²⁷ What I say to you in the dark, tell in the daylight; what you hear in whispers, proclaim from the housetops. ²⁸ Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; fear him rather who can destroy both body and soul in hell. ²⁹ Can you not buy two sparrows for a penny? And yet not one falls to the ground without your Father knowing. ³⁰ Why, every hair on your head has been counted. ³¹ So there is no need to be afraid; you are worth more than hundreds of sparrows. ³² "So if anyone declares himself for me in the presence of men, I will declare myself for him in the presence of my Father in heaven. ³³ But the one who disowns me in the presence of men, I will disown in the presence of my Father in heaven".

Gospel Focus

Continuing through Matthew's Gospel, Jesus gives instructions to the twelve as they prepare to begin ministry-in particular, to avoid fear in proclaiming the gospel. Immediately before today's passage, Jesus warns the apostles about the inevitability of persecution for their preaching. In spite of this, however, Jesus reassures them that the Father will care for them and protect them. Jesus uses two images to make this point. If God knows the whereabouts of a sparrow and the number of hairs on a person's head, then the apostles can trust that God would care even more for them. Jesus also reminds them what is truly important-the soul, rather than the body. While the body passes away, the soul is eternal. Assuring them in the face of persecution, all those who wish to do them harm can only reach the body-no one can harm their souls except themselves, if they were to deny Jesus.

Gospel Reflection

"The only thing we have to fear is fear itself." This memorable opening line from the inaugural address of Franklin D Roosevelt in 1933 lifted the hopes of a nation caught in the grips of the deepest economic depression it had ever experienced. Soon after, programs that aimed at relief, recovery, and reform were put into action and began to have the desired effects. In recent times, people who work in organisational change management have observed that fear, along with cynicism and judgment, is one of the greatest obstacles to creating new structures and relationships. Jesus seems to recognise this long before FDR and modern-day facilitators. One of his most oft-repeated instructions in the gospels is "do not be afraid."

These are similar to the opening words of today's gospel, repeated twice more in this short passage. It comes at the conclusion of the missionary discourse, as Jesus is sending out the Twelve to proclaim the good news, heal the sick, raise the dead, and cast out demons. He has instructed them to go with nothing; no bag; no clothes; no food; no money, but to rely on the hospitality of others; embodying power in vulnerability and communion in interdependence. He has warned them that they will be rejected by some, and even suffer physical abuse; and be handed over to the authorities. Jesus is not blind to the dangers of his mission, and he does not want his disciples to be unprepared when they face these threats.

At the same time, he does not want them to be frightened off by these possible consequences. They are to proclaim the good news openly from "the housetops." And even if they should lose their physical life, this is not the most fearsome things that can happen. Jesus then speaks to them of their supreme value in the eyes of God, as a reason not to be afraid. Just as God takes care of the tiniest of creatures, such as sparrows, even more will divine care encompass Jesus' disciples. It is notable that Jesus does not tell them that God will intervene and rescue them from bodily harm. Should such befall them, however, they are not to give in to fear, because God will be with them and will preserve their life beyond bodily existence.

This gospel gives us an opportunity to reflect on what it is we most fear in following Jesus-not so as to fuel the fear by focusing on it but, rather, to acknowledge honestly what are our obstacles to proclaiming the gospel more fully with our lives. When we face our fears, voice them aloud to another, and surrender them to the One who has counted every hair on our heads, we can defuse their paralysing power over us. Placing our full attention on the One who cares for us and empowers us, there comes a freedom beyond fear.

In the first reading, Jeremiah voices a desire that his opponents be put to lasting shame and that God take vengeance on them. His fear is transformed into praise and trust, as he places everything in God's hands.

Old and New Testament links

First Reading – Jeremiah 20:10-13

¹⁰ I hear so many disparaging me, "'Terror from every side!' Denounce him! Let us denounce him!" All those who used to be my friends watched for my downfall, "Perhaps he will be seduced into error. Then we will master him and take our revenge!" ¹¹ But Yahweh is at my side, a mighty hero; my opponents will stumble, mastered, confounded by their failure; everlasting, unforgettable disgrace will be theirs. ¹² But you, Yahweh Sabaoth, you who probe with justice, who scrutinize the loins and heart, let me see the vengeance you will take on them, for I have committed my cause to you. ¹³ Sing to Yahweh, praise Yahweh, for he has delivered the soul of the needy from the hands of evil men.

Responsorial Reading — Ps 147:12-15, 19-20

R: Lord, in your great love, answer me.

For your sake I bear insult, and shame covers my face. I have become an outcast to my brothers, a stranger to my children, because zeal for your house consumes me, and the insults of those who blaspheme you fall upon me. **(R)**

I pray to you, O Lord, for the time of your favor, O God!
In your great kindness answer me with your constant help.
Answer me, O Lord, for bounteous is your kindness;
in your great mercy turn toward me. **(R)**

"See, you lowly ones, and be glad; you who seek God, may your hearts revive!
For the Lord hears the poor, and his own who are in bonds he spurns not.
Let the heavens and the earth praise him, the seas and whatever moves in them!" **(R)**

Second Reading — Romans 5:12-15

¹² Well then, sin entered the world through one man, and through sin death, and thus death has spread through the whole human race because everyone has sinned.

¹³ Sin existed in the world long before the Law was given. There was no law and so no one could be accused of the sin of "lawbreaking," ¹⁴ yet death reigned over all from Adam to Moses, even though their sin, unlike that of Adam, was not a matter of breaking a law. Adam prefigured the One to come, ¹⁵ but the gift itself considerably outweighed the fall. If it is certain that through one man's fall so many died, it is even more certain that divine grace, coming through the one man, Jesus Christ, came to so many as an abundant free gift.

Catechism of the Catholic Church

305. Jesus asks for childlike abandonment to the providence of our heavenly Father who takes care of his children's smallest needs: "Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?'. . . Your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things shall be yours as well."(Mt 6:31-33; cf. 10:29-31)

1034. Jesus often speaks of "Gehenna" of "the unquenchable fire" reserved for those who to the end of their lives refuse to believe and be converted, where both soul and body can be lost.(Cf. Mt 5:22, 29; 10:28; 13:42, 50; Mk 9:43-48) Jesus solemnly proclaims that he "will send his angels, and they will gather . . . all evil doers, and throw them into the furnace of fire,"(Mt 13:41-42) and that he will pronounce the condemnation: "Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire!"(Mt 25:41)

1816. The disciple of Christ must not only keep the faith and live on it, but also profess it, confidently bear witness to it, and spread it: "All however must be prepared to confess Christ before men and to follow him along the way of the Cross, amidst the persecutions which the Church never lacks."(LG 42; cf. DH 14) Service of and witness to the faith are necessary for salvation: "So everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven; but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven."(Mt 10:32-33)

2145. The faithful should bear witness to the Lord's name by confessing the faith without giving way to fear. (Cf. Mt 10:32; 1 Tim 6:12) Preaching and catechizing should be permeated with adoration and respect for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Sharing and Discussion

1. Jesus seems to suggest that the antidote to the "fear of man" is the "fear of God." Why is it that the fear of God—when understood correctly—can actually make us less fearful of the world?
2. "Seek first his kingdom and righteousness and all these things shall be yours." How do you keep your eyes on the Kingdom when the "demands and distractions" of the 'here and now' make the Kingdom feel far away?"
3. "If anyone declares himself for me in the presence of men, I will declare myself for him in the presence of my Father in heaven." Discuss **ccc 1816**.

Closing Prayer

Facilitator: Good and gracious God, your divine Son tells us to "Fear no one." Strengthen us to rely on your care and love. Hear our prayers that we might one day rejoice without fear with you forever. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

Leader: May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil and bring us to everlasting life.

All: Amen

Looking to deepen your faith and connect with fellow parishioners? Join us for our "Living the Gospel" Bible study and sharing session at the parish. Together, we will reflect on God's Word, grow in faith, and journey together in fellowship.

Day and Time: Every Saturday from 9.30 – 11.00 am

Venue: Level 3, Rm 03-06

All are welcome! For more information, please contact;

Mary Bay - 96965049 (marybay2468@gmail.com)

George Chee – 97399216 (georgejc@gmail.com)

Reflection material available on Parish Website under – (Weekly Bible Sharing - Living the Gospel)

References for the Living the Gospel Reflection:

- 1) Gospel notes taken from the Navarre Bible
- 2) Gospel reflection and Living Liturgy are taken from "Living Liturgy for Sunday and Solemnities" by Order of St Benedict. Published by Liturgical Press, Collegeville, Minnesota. Reprinted with permission.
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