

cross, disregarding the shameful of it, and from now on has taken his place at the right of God's throne. Think of the way he stood such opposition from sinners and then you will not give up for want of courage. In the fight against sin, you have not yet had to keep fighting to the point of death.

■ The word of the Lord.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Jn 10:27

Alleluia, alleluia!

My sheep listen to my voice, says the Lord; I know them, and they follow me.

Alleluia!

GOSPEL

Lk 12:49-53

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke.

I have come not to give peace, but discord.

Jesus said to his disciples: 'I have come to bring fire to the earth, and how I wish it were blazing already! There is a baptism I must still receive, and how great is my distress till it is over!

'Do you suppose that I am here to bring peace on earth? No, I tell you, but rather division. For from now on a household of five will be divided: three against two and two against three; the father divided against the son, son against father, mother against daughter, daughter against mother, mother-in-law against daughter-in-law, daughter-in-law against mother-in-law.'

■ The Gospel of the Lord.

Reflections on the Gospel

NO PEACE WITHOUT CHANGE OF HEART

A tough message that we hear from Jesus in the Gospel today! 'Do you suppose that I am here to bring peace on earth?' Well, wasn't that the message that the angels announced on the night he was born—'Peace on earth to people of good will'? But here he's saying, not peace, but division—division especially within families. What are we to make of it all?

Jesus may in fact have come to bring peace but it is no simple matter for that peace to be received. His message calls for conversion of heart. It challenges deep seated views and comfortable arrangements—especially social arrangements that privilege a few people while many others miss out.

Bringing God's peace to the world will mean for Jesus conflict with the authorities of his people and ultimately death on a cross. It is only after he has emerged from that conflict, victorious in resurrection on the third day, that he will say to his shattered disciples, 'Peace be with you' (Luke 24:36).

So there is a cost to being a peace-bringer to a world that may long for peace but not be prepared to confront the cost that true peace requires.

Even the most basic human institutions are not exempt from the challenge that following Jesus' way requires. Saint Francis of Assisi and many other saints who, like him, followed Jesus in a very radical way, had to break with their families in so doing. It's that sort of challenge that Jesus is being clear about in the Gospel.

Brendan Byrne, SJ



TWENTIETH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME / C

18 AUGUST 2019

FIRST READING

Jer 38:4-6, 8-10

A reading from the prophet Jeremiah

You bore me to be a man of strife for the whole world.

The king's leading men spoke to the king. 'Let Jeremiah be put to death: he is unquestionably disheartening the remaining soldiers in the city, and all the people too, by talking like this. The fellow does not have the welfare of this people at heart so much as its ruin.' 'He is in your hands as you know,' King Zedekiah answered 'for the king is powerless against you.' So they took Jeremiah and threw him into the well of Prince Malchiah in the Court of the Guard, letting him down with ropes. There was no water in the well, only mud, and into the mud Jeremiah sank.

Ebed-melech came out from the palace and spoke to the king, 'My lord king,' he said 'these men have done a wicked thing by treating the prophet Jeremiah like this: they have thrown him into the well where he will die.' At this the king gave Ebed-melech the Cushite the following order: 'Take three men with you from here and pull Jeremiah out of the well before he dies.'

■ The word of the Lord.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Ps 39:2-4, 18. R. v. 14

R. Lord, come to my aid!

1. I waited, I waited for the Lord / and he stooped down to me; / he heard my cry. **R.**
2. He drew me from the deadly pit, / from the miry clay. / He set my feet upon a rock / and made my footsteps firm. **R.**
3. He put a new song into my mouth, / praise of our God. / Many shall see and fear / and shall trust in the Lord. **R.**
4. As for me, wretched and poor, / the Lord thinks of me. / You are my rescuer, my help, / O God, do not delay. **R.**



SECOND READING

Heb 12:1-4

A reading from the letter to the Hebrews

Let us bear patiently the struggle placed upon us.

With so many witnesses in a great cloud on every side of us, we too, then, should throw off everything that hinders us, especially the sin that clings so easily, and keep running steadily in the race we have started. Let us not lose sight of Jesus, who leads us in our faith and brings it to perfection: for the sake of the joy which was still in the future, he endured the

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