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.**

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Breaking Open the Word

WE ARE NOT ALONE

Jeremiah could have been excused for thinking that he had been taken out of the frying pan and cast into the fire! No sooner had he been released from prison and placed under the watchful eyes of the royal guard, than he found himself up to his neck in mud in a water cistern! Little wonder he poured out his heart to God 'the word of the Lord has become for me a reproach and derision' (Jeremiah 20:8). The lot of those who speak the word of God is often one which meets with misunderstanding, rejection and isolation. Speaking the truth is no guarantee of being accepted. Jesus was aware that his mission of preaching the good news to the poor, bringing freedom to captives, and proclaiming the Lord's year of favour (Luke 4:18-19) would bring about division and rejection. As the early Church knew all too well, even family members could be divided based on their response to Jesus' message.

The letter to the Hebrews continues its reflection on the life of faith by noting that despite opposition and difficulties we are not alone. Just as the people of Israel in the desert were accompanied by a cloud that guided them, we are now surrounded by a cloud of witnesses – people of faith that stretch back through the ages to Abraham and Sarah. Above all, Jesus' presence, his example of endurance and his courage in facing the cross, can help us to keep running steadily in the life of faith.

Christopher Monaghan CP

THE SAVING WORD

TWENTIETH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME / C — **14 AUGUST 2022**

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 cross, disregarding the shamefulness 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.**