

2017

- Seems like rather an odd verse from Jeremiah today: “*You duped me, O Lord, and I let myself be duped.*”
- But we see Jeremiah is really lamenting his own self-deception: “*I let myself be duped*”. It seems that Jeremiah may have deluded himself that he would be received with open arms by the people because he was going forth as a prophet of God.
- Alas...no. As he continues: “*All the day I am an object of laughter; everyone mocks me...the word of the LORD has brought me derision and reproach...*”
- Sound familiar? How many of us have been mocked or ridiculed—especially in our day—for our love of God and disciples of Jesus Christ?
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- Jeremiah’s temptation can be our temptation as well...to remain silent when others disapprove of our Catholic faith.
- The good Catholic—any good Christian—may be besieged on all sides by the unbelief of the world—all of these influences glorifying the evils of drugs or drunkenness, lust and deceit, strength used to terrorize rather than to protect and to help.
- And it does at times seem to be easier just to “give in”...to follow the world rather than God...to indulge ourselves in what the rest of the world is indulging in.
- Oh...but to be so unfaithful. So treacherous. So...weak.
- Always is there that ever-prodding, indefatigable presence of God...in our hearts, in our conscience, in our spirits...that longing for Him that is inescapable.
- ...like Jeremiah says today: “*...it becomes like fire burning in my heart, imprisoned in my bones; I grow weary holding it in, I cannot endure it.*”
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- God tells Jeremiah as He tell us: *“Can a man hide himself...so that I cannot see him?...Do I not fill heaven and earth?”* (Jeremiah 23:24)

[Lord] ...Where can I go from your spirit? Or where can I flee from your presence?

⁸ *If I ascend to heaven, you are there; if I make my bed in [the underworld], you are there.*

⁹ *If I take the wings of the morning and settle at the farthest limits of the sea,*

¹⁰ *even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me fast...*

¹² *even the darkness is not dark to you; the night is as bright as the day, for darkness is as light to you. (Psalm 139:7-18)*

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- So...try to escape God and appease the world and inordinate passions, or remain faithful to him.
 - Can't escape God. The prophet Jonah found that out.
 - But, as God is all-good and eternal, and He is everlasting love...why in the world would we want to escape Him?...especially for the fickle approval of Men?
 - “Doesn't that forbidden fruit look sweet?”, asked the serpent. But, like all temptations, while it promises pleasure, its inevitable end is in sorrow.
 - For to depart from God is to depart from all the is good...all that comforts...all that is true...all that brings true and eternal happiness.
 - Yes, we have to bear trials for a time, but being steadfast in our faith despite challenge, our end will be everlasting life with that eternal love, goodness and truth.

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- The Christian always looks to Jesus...simply expecting challenge and even rejection from the world.

- As He warns us: *“If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own...but I chose you out of the world...”* (John 15:18-19)
 - But...so. what.? As He also says today: *“What profit would there be for one to gain the whole world [to be rich, famous, popular, powerful] and forfeit his life?...For the Son of Man will come with his angels in his Father’s glory, and then he will repay all according to his conduct.”*
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- Being a good Christian is not a wimpy calling. You KNOW that Satan is going to smile and tempt you to evil.
 - And you have to be tough enough to smile back and say: *“Give it your best shot, Slick.”*
 - Because Jesus always supports His faithful...giving you all the backup you need, for as St. Paul says: *“He will not let us be tempted beyond our strength.”*
 - So YOU say: *“Okay, Satan...you want to fight? Well...two can play at that game.”*
 - And begin: *“Hail Mary, full of grace...”*
 - I say that rather tongue-in-cheek, but really...Our Mother is our greatest help, because Our Lord comes along with His mom.
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- No one escapes God, and only those humble and obedient before God will have peace.
- So...I repeat today’s reading from St. Paul: *“I urge you, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God, your spiritual worship. Do not conform yourselves to this age but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and pleasing and perfect.”*
- Remembering, when challenged in your faith, that: *“Blessed are you when men revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of*

evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven. (Matthew 5:11f)

Reading 1

[Jer 20:7-9](#)

You duped me, O LORD, and I let myself be duped;
you were too strong for me, and you triumphed.
All the day I am an object of laughter;
everyone mocks me.

Whenever I speak, I must cry out,
violence and outrage is my message;
the word of the LORD has brought me
derision and reproach all the day.

I say to myself, I will not mention him,
I will speak in his name no more.
But then it becomes like fire burning in my heart,
imprisoned in my bones;
I grow weary holding it in, I cannot endure it.

Responsorial Psalm

[Ps 63:2, 3-4, 5-6, 8-9](#)

R. (2b) My soul is thirsting for you, O Lord my God.

O God, you are my God whom I seek;
for you my flesh pines and my soul thirsts
like the earth, parched, lifeless and without water.

R. My soul is thirsting for you, O Lord my God.

Thus have I gazed toward you in the sanctuary
to see your power and your glory,
For your kindness is a greater good than life;
my lips shall glorify you.

R. My soul is thirsting for you, O Lord my God.

Thus will I bless you while I live;
lifting up my hands, I will call upon your name.
As with the riches of a banquet shall my soul be satisfied,
and with exultant lips my mouth shall praise you.

R. My soul is thirsting for you, O Lord my God.

You are my help,
and in the shadow of your wings I shout for joy.
My soul clings fast to you;
your right hand upholds me.

R. My soul is thirsting for you, O Lord my God.

Reading II
[Rom 12:1-2](#)

I urge you, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God,
to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice,
holy and pleasing to God, your spiritual worship.
Do not conform yourselves to this age
but be transformed by the renewal of your mind,
that you may discern what is the will of God,
what is good and pleasing and perfect.

Gospel
[Mt 16:21-27](#)

Jesus began to show his disciples
that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer greatly
from the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes,
and be killed and on the third day be raised.
Then Peter took Jesus aside and began to rebuke him,
“God forbid, Lord! No such thing shall ever happen to you.”
He turned and said to Peter,
“Get behind me, Satan! You are an obstacle to me.
You are thinking not as God does, but as human beings do.”

Then Jesus said to his disciples,
“Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself,
take up his cross, and follow me.
For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it,
but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.
What profit would there be for one to gain the whole world
and forfeit his life?
Or what can one give in exchange for his life?
For the Son of Man will come with his angels in his Father’s glory,
and then he will repay all according to his conduct.”