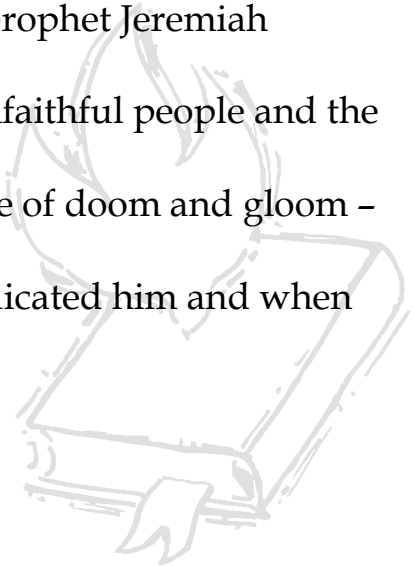


Homily
20th Sunday OT - C
Rev. Peter G. Jankowski
August 13-14, 2022

Jer 38: 4-6, 8-10
Ps 40: 2, 3, 4, 18
Heb 12: 1-4
Lk 12: 49-53

So if we focus literally on the readings that we have just proclaimed, obviously these readings are about “doom and gloom” in a sense. The manner in which we are living now is not conforming to the gospel message, according to our Lord, especially in today’s age, where one is pitted against the other, where we tear others down to build ourselves up. All you have to do is read the news or watch television politics. We see this tearing down among each other, in television and certainly in movies – the days of *Ozzie and Harriet* and *Andy Griffith* are long gone. Sometimes doom and gloom happens next door to us!

If we focus intently on our first reading, the prophet Jeremiah prophesized about what would happen to an unfaithful people and the penalty he had to pay for preaching this message of doom and gloom – the people to whom he preached wanted to eradicate him and when



those people were eradicated by the Babylonians, Jeremiah was forced to watch his prophesy come to fruition by being placed in the middle of the city to watch it burn.

That “doom and gloom” mentality is the focus of Jesus; preaching in today’s gospel and the penalty our Lord ultimately paid with his life on the cross. Scholars define the word “gospel” as “good news” but the news does not seem very positive in this weekend’s readings. Even this weekend, when so many folks in our community choose to invest in the secular festival outside over the source and our summit of life in here, I suppose we can preach “doom and gloom” to those who put the profane ahead of the sacred. These readings are not the ones that will inspire the faithful to invest in their parish – more likely, they will scare the life out of the faithful and scare a whole lot of people away from Church.

Nevertheless, this is the theme of this weekend’s readings – *Many are called and few are chosen*; many hear the message but few choose to respond. On the dark side of the gospel message, we are still responsible to heed the call of Jeremiah and the prophets, to heed the warnings of

the Lord and the saints that follow. We are required to preach this gospel message, knowing that many will not listen and our lives will be compromised in the process. In fact, the deeper I get into this homily, the more I think to myself how much I'd rather have a brat and a beer than to challenge all of you with what the readings are trying to say.

I also know that, in my own personal life, Lord knows about the things I have done and the sins I have committed; in some ways, I am not the one that should be preaching this message. I am sure parents have the same problem when they preach to their kids, especially when the parents know that the kids are not always happy with everything that a parent tells them to do. We have to remind ourselves that, despite our own shortcomings, we need to preach this message of repentance and love, both for ourselves and those around us.

That all said, I also have to remind myself of those individuals who *do* follow the gospel and who are far better in living the gospel message than I ever could. Over this last month, there have been so many good examples of faith in this community that should inspire us to follow that example.

Take, for instance, everything that surrounded the St. Anne Novena. We had been preparing for months for this special day. We recorded all nine Novena Masses in advance as well as the Mass for the Feast Day online. In the mail, we received countless responses from those who wished to pray for those in need. We received prayer intentions online, in the mail and in the office, intentions from families who needed to find jobs, pray for loved ones who were sick or dead and those families that needed encouragement during their time of trial.

We had one individual that was so inspired by the online Masses that this person responded in prayer by donating \$20,000 to St. Anne's Church and \$33,000 to St. Pat's to pay off that roof repair that desperately needs to be done. Due to our requests online, we received more resources than we needed to repair to repair our grotto in honor of Our Lady of Lourdes, a grotto that serves as the backdrop for our community Mass and picnic on August 21st.

Think about the blessings that this worship space offered. Mind you, during COVID, if you recall, nobody could celebrate mass indoors. So what did we do at St Anne's? We celebrated the mass in their pavilion.

What did we do at St. Pat's? We celebrated Masses at the outdoor grotto and distributed the sacraments outside the Church. As a result, as many were being shut out from the sacraments and facing the consequences that Jeremiah and the Lord warned us about in the scriptures, instead around here, many people came to receive the sacraments and so many people were appreciative because of it. So many volunteers kept distributing communion. We kept hearing confessions. We kept anointing the sick. We kept bringing hope because that's the gospel message as well.

COVID became such a divisive subject for those of faith and the government because some in our society were trying to lock them into their homes instead of providing for them the good Lord who could offer healing and safety. What so many in these parishes accomplished was to confer the sacraments freely, lovingly and overflowing to the people of our community.

As a result, the response of our community at St. Anne's church on the feast of St. Anne was so overwhelming this year that my thumb became sore from all the anointings that the faithful wanted to receive. I

heard that some people came back twice to three times to get anointed. I almost felt that after all the anointings I did after the mass, after listening to Kevin Sampson's wonderful music he offered at the 10:00 a.m. Mass in English with Fr. John Peters, CSV preaching, after watching Deacon Jim Kelly process through town with the relic of St. Anne, and, watching the faithful come back to the pavilion to finish their rosary and socialize together, the comments I heard about the Spirit flowing through our community was overwhelming.

I was thinking about the hundred or more souls that attended our Latin Mass in the Extraordinary Form at 12:00 noon and how the Latin Choir from St. Joseph's Church in Rockdale travelled over an hour to sing at our Mass. Fr. Moises Mesh, CSV processed with the relic after this Mass. Afterwards, the entire congregation finished their rosaries inside the church and, one by one, each one of them venerated that relic. These moments of faith reminded me about how powerful this moment is for those who truly understand the gift of prayer. The faithful of St. Anne's & Patrick's were so amazed by the crowd (most of whom adored in suits and ties on a hot summer day) that they, too, joined the group in

prayer, along with Deacon Jim Kelly, who had just assisted at the 10:00 Mass and processed with the relic afterwards! After the 12:00 Mass, my thumb became sore once again from anointing those hundred souls!!! I gave thanks for the sore thumb – if it was going to hurt, this was the PERFECT way of hurting it!!!

At the 2:00 p.m. on the Feast of St. Anne, Fr. Moises Mesh, CSV celebrated the Mass in Spanish with the assistance of Deacon Arnulfo Cisneros. After the Mass, Deacon Arnulfo processed around the city with that relic once again. By the end of the day, we had celebrated three Masses and recited rosaries in English, Latin and Spanish; hundreds of faithful from the Midwest came to venerate that relic, get anointed and asked God for intervention during their time of trial.

I also want to thank Julie Dillenburg, who took care of the kids on the Feast Day by making windsocks reflecting of our Lord's genealogy and telling the story of St. Anne to the kids present. At the time, I did not know the difference between a windsock and a sock puppet – I was waiting for “Kukla and Ollie” to make their appearance in the city (this is an old Chicago children's show reference!).

So much good took place on July 26th besides the worship services. The Poor Claire sisters made a hundred rosaries for us to use for St. Anne's day - by the time the last Mass took place, no rosaries were left! So many folks donated their time and resources for donating flowers, religious articles and votive candles for the sake of the event.

So many good folks made sacrifices for the sake of the faith on St. Anne's Day. So many stories were told about the grace that was shared at those Masses and the grace that was passed forward, from the healings within our community, the prayers that were answered and the \$33,000 that was donated to St. Pat's roof as an answer to all that grace. When we learn how to welcome each other, embrace each other and welcome each other to this table in a spirit of love, then we allow ourselves and others to be formed by God so that we might have everlasting life.

According to the gospel message we read in today's scriptures tells us what happens when we *do not* listen to the message and what happens when we *do not* live in love. On the other side of this message, we learn that when we *do* love and welcome our neighbor, when we "do

unto others," we then find the face of God in those we encounter. Please know that I will continue to celebrate these online masses because you asked me to continue with them, which I am most willing to do. Please know that I continue to pray for you. I love you in God's name and I will do what I can to help you out.

Please do the same for the local parishes that you should support. Continue to be fed by God's word and sacrament. Continue to do unto others and to live on the bright side of the gospel message. When we allow that light to shine and unite us as different members of the body of Christ, we then learn about the obedience to and the love of God that will carry us to heaven. Let us take that message and that spirit and that love and continue to share it with the people that we meet. This is our prayer.