

Rev. Toan Do  
Jeremiah 20:10-13  
Romans 5:12-15  
Matthew 10:26-33X

**TWELFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME**  
**EPIPHANY CATHOLIC CHURCH**  
Louisville, KY, USA  
June 21, 2026

I see many parallels among Jesus, His teaching, and the story of Jeremiah in our first reading today. If Jesus used the words "Fear no one," I believe He was talking about His faith and His total trust in God. As long as one has faith and trust in God, nothing in this world, no harm or violence in this world, can do damage to the person. Jesus shows us this image to His disciples and to us, even to the point of death. Likewise, from the Prophet Jeremiah, the story which we heard today portrays a story in which Jeremiah was put in prison, a cistern right outside the temple of a priest called Pashhur, because of his hatred for Jeremiah, who spoke up on the eve about the danger of invasion coming into Jerusalem and Judah. But all the people, including the king, did not listen to Jeremiah, and because of that, not only the people led by this priest Pashhur, but also all his friends, as Jeremiah tells us in the verses before and in the reading today. Not only his friends, but also his relatives, his siblings, abandoned him; eventually, they did what they could; they put him in prison, threw him in the cistern. God looked after him, and he survived. Much violence was committed against Jeremiah. At the end of the story in the book of Jeremiah, we learned that the Babylonian armies took over all of them and put them into captivity, including Jeremiah himself, the priests, the elite, and all the people of Judah and Jerusalem. What Jeremiah showed us in his example of going through all the danger and violence done to him was his trust in the hands of God.

In the time of Jesus, of course, we already learned so much, and too, so little, depending on the context, but Jesus' story portrays another story. His trust was in God. Because of that, not only could he say to himself fear no one, " but also to teach His disciples to fear no human being who could destroy the body, but not the soul. Fear only the one who could mislead and lead them astray, so that after death, the person not only loses the body, but also the soul. Jesus showed us an example of trusting in God to the point of death, and because of that, God raised Him from the dead and gave Him a new, eternal life with God. In the second reading today, Paul writes to the Roman Christians, probably in the sixties. Paul portrays the image of one man, of one human being. He used the same word for both Jesus and

Adam, Anthropos, the one person, because he lost trust in God entering his life. Because of that, of course, this is a theological portrayal interpretation of the Book of Genesis. But through that man, one man, one person, one primitive human being, all humanity suffered death and was abandoned, of course, expelled from the garden. However, as Paul continued to say, including Moses and all the great ancestors of Jesus Himself, none of them escaped death.

Paul says, through Jesus' death, His suffering, and most importantly through His Resurrection, however, by the hands and the finger of God's power, God raised Jesus from the dead so that all, including those who came before Jesus in his time, and all those after Jesus might be saved. The example continues, of course, this weekend, our secular holiday of honoring fathers. But this image of fathering can speak well into our biblical tradition. Just think of Peter, one of Jesus' great examples of the disciples, and Paul, the two of them. We know Peter from all three gospels: Mark, Matthew, and Luke. Peter was married, had a family, and Jesus even visited his mother-in-law's house and cured her disease and illness. We learned that Peter was a man of family life; he gave up all that to follow Jesus.

After the traditions of writing of the gospel, we learned that Peter was among those who were martyred in Rome by the hands of the sinners, as he was following Jesus. As He said, fear no violence, no power of this world, fear only the ones who can destroy not only the body after death, but the soul as well. The other example that we can also learn here, as of course, Peter, if we can interpret, he must have been a father in his family, and he suffered death and persecution. On the other hand, Paul, from our understanding and reading of the New Testament, there was no consensus about whether Paul was married or not. However, he, too, represents the fatherly figure to all those who listen to him. Look at the Roman Christians, just listen to the Corinthian Christians, the Philippian Christians, and many other Christian communities in which and from where Paul found their worshipping community, which believed in God and followed Jesus.

Paul became a fatherly figure, a spiritual father to all gentile Christians and all Gentile people who believe in God and believe in the Resurrection of Jesus through the power of the Holy Spirit. This weekend, our society, our families, and our community celebrate and honor fathers. They include fathers of flesh and blood, fathers of spiritual leadership, and fatherly figures. I would like to invite all of us to spare a few moments now in silence and think of one example, one incident in which someone in our lives, who is not only our father, biological father, spiritual father, or fatherly figure, one who has done something to uplift our lives in the name of God. Also, by contrast, I ask that we think of one example in which we failed to honor and to love our fathers, let us say to ourselves, if Adam sinned, all humanity followed him. Through Jesus, all humanity has been saved;

our old self has been redeemed by Jesus to become a new self, a new Christian in the image of our own fathers, of our own God, of our Jesus, and of Paul and Peter.