

Rev. Toan Do
Jeremiah 20: 7-9
Romans 12: 1-2
Matthew 16: 21-27X

**TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME
EPIPHANY CATHOLIC CHURCH**

Louisville KY, USA
August 30, 2026

In every age, there are people who want to resist the end of life. Just going back about three hundred years before the time of Jesus, example, the first emperor or the first king who claimed the Southeast Asian kingdom and empire, Qin Shi Hung of China, because he had so much power everyone was subjected to him. The last thing he wanted was to live longer. In fact, he dreamed of having life eternally here on earth. During the first century, shortly after Jesus' death, about the years 40 to 49, Caligula, one of the young Roman emperors who wished to be called God, human God, wished to live long eternal, unfortunately, because of his nasty personality and evil human nature he was assassinated and died at the age, very young, less than 40 years old. Also in our own times, advancement in medicines and medications help us live longer to some extent, wishing we may enjoy life a little bit longer because we don't know what life is after here on earth.

So, the dreams for life eternally here on earth, there's a distinction, this has always accompanied human nature. Not only Jesus, but the Jewish, Judeo-Christian tradition, particularly Jewish people have always resisted life eternal on earth. In the first reading today, from the Prophet Jeremiah, Jeremiah suffered so much because he wanted to preach the message that God had asked him to do, to the extent of calling on God's name in front of other people, telling them that you, too, must suffer, become the risen, and suffering for Him. Jeremiah allowed God to inspire him using the word dupe, and he allowed God to dupe him. He too, on the other hand wanted, and let God dupe him. So, there's combinations of human in agreement with God here to guide Jeremiah through difficult times. In Paul's Letter to the Roman Christians, Paul reminded them that they should live in this life here on earth in ways that God will be part of their journey.

God will inspire them so that living as God's children, they may discern God's will. This is the crucial point, the line in which Paul tells us how we can and in what way we can discern God's will. Last week, I was preaching, giving my homily during the nine o'clock mass. As you recall the gospel reading, just the passage before what we heard today. In that gospel, same from Matthew, Peter stood up

among all of his disciples in the Gentile region. Because of the will of God, Peter called and proclaimed Jesus to be Christ, the Son of God. Because of that proclamation, Jesus gave Peter not only his new name from Simon into Peter, but also used the play on words, Petros in Greek for Peter as the rock, the foundation from which not only his life here on earth can be built, but also eternal life so long as he follows God's will.

What is God's will here in today's gospel? Jesus following God's will, namely, contrary to all the expectation of humanity or human being here on earth to have the will to live eternally here on earth simply, because we have not yet come to know what life eternal with God is. In order to come to that point of transformation or eternally with God, Jesus has to go through suffering by the hands of other humans. Also died, most particularly, most importantly, risen by God on the third day. That the will of God, contrary to all the wisdom of this world, that people expect and hope to live eternally here on earth. But in order to receive the glorious reunion and life with God, one must be transformed from life into the next through suffering, death, and resurrection.

The same rock that Jesus gave Peter the nickname, Petros, and Cephas in Aramaic, the same rock, not only his faith, but also foundation of all Judeo Christians after Jesus. That rock must be living faith, not the rock as we see. These are the tricky things here in the gospel, last week and this week. If we only look at the rock as a non-living thing that we build a house on, time will destroy it. But the faith that is living, the faith that drives the person onward, not just at this moment, but onward from this moment on, faith will be happy to face the time when that person comes to death. That is where, today, within only a few verses after the proclamation, and the praise that Jesus gave Peter, Peter today, failed that test of time, because he was thinking not of Jesus in the name of God, but thinking in terms of human beings not wanting or even rebuking Jesus to suffer, to die and to be raised.

The contradiction of this human wisdom is not that we are not yet able to see the glory or our glorious union with God. Through Jesus, as we see, God reflects Himself and shows Himself that He has always walked with human beings through suffering, through death, and most importantly, through resurrection. This particular Twenty-Second Sunday in Ordinary Time, the three scriptures give us another perspective into how our life here on earth will be. All of us will face suffering. All of us, including people in ancient time, including Jesus Himself will face death. Will each and every one of us here allow God to raise us up on the last day?

This past week, it happened that I was called by a number of Deacons who were on call, as I mentioned before, three times to the same hospital for some reason, Baptist East, to anoint people who are Catholics, but for some reason their pastor

could not come. Another case was that their parish was 40 minutes away. Another occasion, the person was Catholic but had been non-practicing for a few years because she was struggling with cancer. It was on Friday. When I came, I was asked to come, her friends of 46 years were with her there. She was unconscious. We prayed the prayer in the book for the Sacrament of Anointing, this friend who was not Catholic, who was raised Presbyterian, but because she knew her friend was of Catholic faith, she wanted to help her friend by calling a Catholic priest to come to anoint her.

As we pray together at the very last moment, we often experience this, the Presbyterian friend who is not Catholic was in tears when we read and prayed the prayer for the one who is about to die, asking God to accompany this dying person at the very point in which our human nature is so weak, but the faith of those who are around us can bring us forward, can invite God, once again, into the life and the journey of this dying person. It would take us, so easy, to be like Peter at one moment, to proclaim Jesus to be Christ, the Son of God, but also takes us one split second to misunderstand the will that God has for us. But it is with living faith on the rock, that rock has to become the living faith to keep inviting God to dupe us and allow God, and allow ourselves to be duped by the Spirit and the inspiration of the living God.