

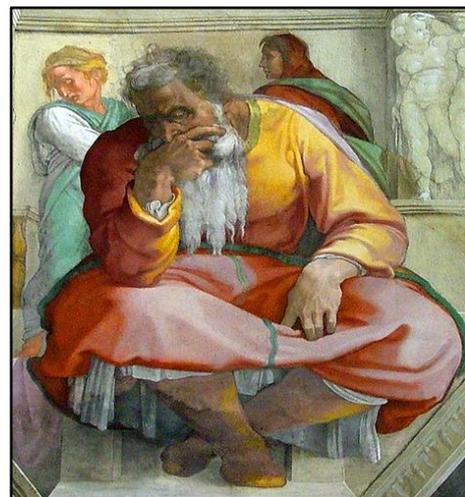
**READINGS AND REFLECTION  
FOR THE 22nd SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME**

<https://www.catholicbishops.ie/readings/?feature=sunday>

**THE FIRST READING IS FROM THE BOOK OF JEREMIAH 20:7-9**

*The word of the Lord has meant insult for me.*

You have seduced me, the Lord,  
and I have let myself be seduced.  
You have overpowered me:  
you were the stronger.  
I am a daily laughing-stock, everybody's butt.  
Each time I speak the word,  
I have to howl and proclaim: 'Violence and ruin!'  
The word of the Lord has meant for me  
insult, derision, all day long.  
I used to say, 'I will not think about him,  
I will not speak in his name any more.'  
Then there seemed to be a fire burning in my heart,  
imprisoned in my bones.  
The effort to restrain it wearied me,  
I could not bear it.



The Word of the Lord.

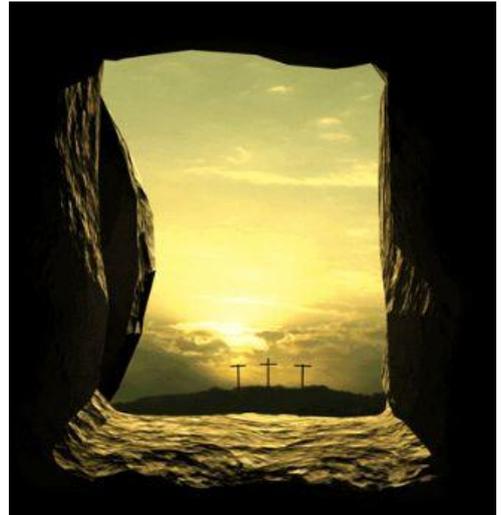
**RESPONSORIAL PSALM PSALM 62**

O God, you are my God, for you I long;  
for you my soul is thirsting.  
My body pines for you  
like a dry, weary land without water.  
***For you my soul is thirsting, O Lord my God.***

So I gaze on you in the sanctuary  
to see your strength and your glory.  
Your love is better than life.  
My lips will speak your praise.  
***For you my soul is thirsting, O Lord my God.***

So I will bless you all my life.  
In your name I will lift up my hands.  
My soul shall be filled as with a banquet.  
My mouth shall praise you with joy.  
***For you my soul is thirsting, O Lord my God.***

For you have been my help.  
In the shadow of your wings I rejoice.  
My soul clings to you.  
Your right hand holds me fast.  
***For you my soul is thirsting, O Lord my God.***



**THE SECOND READING IS FROM ST PAUL'S LETTER TO THE ROMANS 12:1-2**  
*Offering your living bodies as a holy sacrifice.*

**T**hink of God's mercy, my brothers,  
and worship him, I beg you, in a way that is worthy of thinking beings,  
by offering your living bodies as a holy sacrifice, truly pleasing to God.  
Do not model yourselves on the behaviour of the world around you,  
but let your behaviour change, modelled by your new mind.  
This is the only way to discover the will of God and know what is good,  
what it is that God wants, what is the perfect thing to do.

The Word of the Lord.

### **GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

May the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ enlighten the eyes of our mind,  
so that we can see what hope his call holds for us. Ephesians 1:17,18

**A READING FROM THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW 16:21-27**

*If anyone wants to be a follower of mine, let him renounce himself*

Jesus began to make it clear to his disciples that he was destined to go to Jerusalem and suffer grievously at the hands of the elders and chief priests and scribes, to be put to death and to be raised up on the third day.

Then, taking him aside, Peter started to remonstrate with him. 'Heaven preserve you, Lord,' he said 'this must not happen to you'. But he turned and said to Peter, 'Get behind me, Satan! You are an obstacle in my path, because the way you think is not God's way but man's!'



Then Jesus said to his disciples, 'If anyone wants to be a follower of mine, let him renounce himself and take up his cross and follow me. For anyone who wants to save his life will lose it, but anyone who loses his life for my sake will find it. What, then, will a man gain if he wins the whole world and ruins his life? Or what has a man to offer in exchange for his life?

'For the Son of Man is going to come in the glory of his Father with his angels, and, when he does, he will reward each one according to his behaviour.

The Gospel of the Lord.

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## REFLECTION

Patricia Stevenson, Josephite

People trying to respond to God may complain, "You conned me God. I fell for it. Now everyone is laughing at me... That's enough! No more teaching in his name. Then I can't help myself, a fire burns within me and I can't hold it in."

Jeremiah experienced the unfairness that is part of the good person's life. "Why me?"- we may hear. We've said it ourselves. Sometimes we feel good about our discipleship; we can sing, "Everything's going my way!" Then come moments when we stumble. We see the values of big business penetrating even the leadership of the church. We hear cries for justice from our leaders while ignoring their own injustice to many groups. Jeremiah echoes our grief and also the grief of God.

Last Sunday's reading presented Peter on a high, "You are the Christ the Son of the living God." Peter's imaged God as detached from the suffering of humanity, so unlike the God of the suffering prophets such as Jeremiah. When Jesus indicated to his disciples that he would suffer and die, this was too much for Peter.

Peter's dialogue with Jesus is reminiscent of Jesus' encounter with Satan the Tempter. "If you are the Son of God throw yourself down, the angels will catch you." (Matthew 4:6) Jesus rejected this challenge to test God and rejects Peter's suggestion. He called Peter, Satan! The motif of temptation is repeated a third time in the passion narrative. "Satan" the tempter is Jesus' own fear. "My father, if it is possible, let this cup pass away from me..." Jesus, in this cry, was just like us. When deep suffering or death faces us, all our pious promises of undying fidelity may count for little. Our first cry can be that of a child, "Why didn't you save me?"

Jesus prayer doesn't not end with the plea to be rescued. He continues, "But not as I wish, let it be as you wish." "Not my will but your will be done" is Jesus' prayer. The prophets knew the painful journey of tension between proclaiming the Word of God and facing the negative responses of the people they challenged. Jesus knew that to challenge his community's powerholders was to court pain. He understood that the religious authorities, whose lifestyles, values and interpretation of their religious tradition which he challenged, would seek to silence him. The Gospel writers with the benefit of history were able to add the explicit details of his dying.

In the letter to the Romans, Paul pleas for us to remain faithful to the Gospel. The meaning of 'sacrifice' is to set apart, to dedicate, to give wholly. In this passage Paul compares the faithful disciple to an act of worship dedicated to God. We carry within ourselves the blueprint of Christ. Therefore, Paul calls us to resist the lure of the values of a society that doesn't understand the Gospel. Only a renewal of our minds and spirit will give us the skills to discern the mind of God.

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