

22nd Sunday of Ordinary Time

Jeremiah 20:7-9
Ps 63:2-6, 8-9
Romans 12:1-2
Matthew 16:21-27

Monday September 4

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18
Ps 96:1-5, 11-13
Luke 4:16-30

Tuesday September 5

1 Thessalonians 5:1-6, 9-11
Ps 27:1, 4, 13-14
Luke 4:31-37

Wednesday September 6

Colossians 1:1-8
Ps 52:10, 11
Luke 4:38-44

Thursday September 7

Colossians 1:9-14
Ps 98:2-6
Luke 5:1-11

Friday September 8

Nativity of Mary
Rom 8:28-30 or Mic 5:1-4
Ps 13:6 (Isaiah 61:10)
Matthew 1:1-16, 18-23

Saturday September 9

St. Peter Claver
Colossians 1:21-23
Ps 54:3-4, 6, 8
Luke 6:1-5

Today's first reading is one of my personal favorites. I have often felt the way Jeremiah does here. I have yelled at God, "You duped me, O Lord, and I let myself be duped!" And I allow it again and again. "You knew this would happen, Lord! Why did you lead me into this trial?" Have you ever felt that way?

Why do we let him do this to us? Why do we trust God even though he leads us into difficult situations? Why do we follow Jesus into giving our help and love to others even though it's going to feel very uncomfortable if not downright painful?

Walking with God and serving his kingdom is an adventure. We can expect the unexpected, and unfortunately in this world that includes

suffering – denying ourselves the opportunity to pursue self-centered agendas, taking up crosses, and following Jesus all the way to Calvary (but then of course, all the way to resurrection, too, as explained in the Gospel reading).

Because we love God, we offer ourselves as a living sacrifice, like the second reading asks us to do. This is the highest form of worship; it's a spiritual communion that we experience outside of the Eucharistic liturgy of Mass. In union with Jesus, we *are* the Eucharist.

As Jeremiah's complaint shows us, we can safely complain to God. We can tell him, without getting punished, that we do not like working for him. Complaining to others, however,

is a sin because it causes gossip and prejudices and makes God look bad.

Asking for prayer support during our trials is important, but complaining to others shows how little we trust God. Eventually,

we will see the good that comes from our sacrifices, and this is what we should communicate to others.

Reflect & Discuss:

1. How do you feel when you do a good deed and it later works against you? Have you said "no" to allowing it to happen again?
2. What brings the healing love of Jesus to you to help you recover?
3. What unexpected sufferings have you encountered while giving someone a gift of unconditional love or while doing some other service for the kingdom of God?
4. How did you feel about God at that time? Was the cross you carried worth all the hardships? Explain.

