

Homily 12th Sunday Cycle A

“Combating the tendency to give into human respect”

- Part of the struggle of our fallen human nature is the weakness in all of us, to a greater or lesser degree, based upon our personality, family background, and other variables, is the desire to be liked by other people – even to the point sometimes of compromising our core principles, values, and Catholic training to the detriment of our soul
- The prophet Jeremiah is struggling with this dynamic in the 1st reading, as the ppl of Israel have turned on him because they as a whole don't like what he is saying to them, particularly about the need to change their behavior to follow God faithfully. The call to repentance and conversion is never a popular one! How often humans attack the messenger because they don't like the message. Pastors perpetual challenge - tell flock what they need to hear rather than what they want to hear! Remember as disciples of Jesus we are called to a certain standard of conduct and inner transformation that the world doesn't like. We have to be willing to go against the grain, even when it brings on ridicule and rejection. That is why the Holy Spirit gives us the spiritual gift of **fortitude** in our Baptism and Confirmation.
- The struggle against sin and human respect tie us together in a web of darkness. As St. Paul points out before Jesus came to earth, and taught us the truth and offered his life as a living sacrifice for the salvation of mankind and then gave us the Catholic Church as the Ark of Salvation, we were all in the darkness; none of us could go to Heaven. All the just souls from Adam onward were waiting to be released from Sheol or the place of the dead.
- In The Gospel Jesus gives us an essential warning that we need to be concerned about what our Heavenly Father thinks of us – not what other people think. *Fear not the ones who can kill your body but not your soul fear rather fear the One who can send both body and soul to Gehenna (Hell).* Of course if we worry about what our Heavenly Father thinks (e.g. *not receiving Holy Communion in the state of mortal sin – and don't put others on the spot in that regard, e.g., families and teenage members*), we will be striving for holiness (e.g. *praying and going to Confession regularly*), and so will set a good example to other human beings, and so everything truly does work together for the good of those who love God (Romans 8). God's Providence is always looking out for our good. Never forget that! God's loves us beyond our imagining and so will do everything in His power to save us - but will we respond in kind with our free response? Will it be one of love for God- keeping His Commandments? Or selfishness- doing what I want to do apart from God? Something to ponder seriously. God bless you.