

FROM THE DESK OF **Fr. Julius**

Brothers and Sisters in Christ; Grace and peace!



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faithful

I begin by expressing my heartfelt appreciation to all in our parish who attended the funeral of our own Bill Ryan. Our women's group were able to organize a genuinely nice luncheon in tribute to Bill and his family which was very affirming. It was nice to see new and active Ladies in the women's group! May God grant him eternal peace with Our Lord. The Gospel this Sunday is another of my favorites as it is a throwback and memory nudge: when newly ordained and sent back to my own home parish at Ayangba. The reaction I received was similar to our Lord Jesus. Despite their response like the early Christians, I was still able to keep my faith and conviction, especially amongst my own people.

Our First Reading tells us how God called Jeremiah 'prophet to the nations' and equipped him to face opposition and rejection within an uncovenant people. Dubbed the 'weeping prophet, Jeremiah's heart was so very tender. As his prophecies increased, the prophet Jeremiah was beaten, put into stocks, lowered into a deep cistern of mud, for his zeal. In this passage, many Old Testament scholars cannot help but see Jesus, the greatest of all prophets. In our second reading, Paul, who had spent much of his ministry emphasizing the importance of faith and hope, raises love to an even higher level: this is not the Pharisees' love of the best seats in the synagogue, nor the love between husbands and wives but to God's loving act of sending Christ to die for sin.

Our Gospel continues the thesis of last Sunday's discourse, after our Lord transformed water into wine. St. Luke presents Jesus' "Inaugural Address" at his former synagogue of Nazareth with the subsequent reaction from those who claimed to know him so well. The passage shows us how Jesus, much like Jeremiah and Paul, all contended with skepticism and criticism with prophetic courage. No matter how strong the opposition, the three had the conviction that God was with them. The wrath that the people felt towards Jesus in the synagogue was ironic. They had wanted Jesus to perform a miracle for them, but His disappearing from them as they tried to throw him off the brow of the hill was the only miracle they would ever witness!

There are times in our own lives when we encounter rejection or have been guilty of ignoring and snubbing others. The readings this Sunday serve both as warning and encouragement, against arrogance, prejudice, and hard-heartedness. At the same time, we are moved internally to remain strong like Jesus, Jeremiah, and St. Paul, recapping our readings. Rejection causes pain, especially from people who may have known better. Therefore, for the many times we have been rejected or violated as God's agents of healing and saving grace, may we radically remember to console Jesus, run to our Mother Mary, and pray for the person who rejected us. The worst of all rejections is the rejection of our Creator, as it occurred right in Jesus' hometown. Although we are told that Jesus marveled at people of 'great faith,' here we see our Lord marveling at 'great unbelief.' Do we see that our Lord Jesus was not seeking honor from man, but from the Father? "*That which constitutes the life of the saints is precisely their continual attention to God and this also should form the life of those who . . . seek only to accomplish his holy will, to love him and so make others love him.* — St. John Baptiste de la Salle

~JOYOUS SUNDAY~!