

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON (or a hymn) Have mercy on me, O Lord, for I cry to you all the day long. O Lord, you are good and forgiving, full of mercy to all who call to you.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM (Ps 62)

ANTIPHON: My soul is thirsting for you, O Lord my God.

RESPONSE: My soul is thirsting for you, O Lord my God.

LECTOR: 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. **R.**

LECTOR: So I gaze on you in the sanctuary to see your strength and your glory. For your love is better than life, my lips will speak your praise. **R.**

LECTOR: 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. **R.**

LECTOR: 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. **R.**

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION Alleluia, alleluia! May the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ enlighten the eyes of our heart, that we might see how great is the hope to which we are called. Alleluia!

COMMUNION ANTIPHON (or a hymn) How great is the goodness, Lord, that you keep for those who fear you.

Or

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God. Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

TODAY'S READINGS Jeremiah 20:7-9; Romans 12:1-2; Matthew 16:21-27

NEXT WEEK (23rd Sunday of Year A) Ezekiel 33:7-9; Psalm 94; Romans 13:8-10; Matthew 18:15-20 Luke 3:10-18.

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*Embracing
suffering and
hardship*



30 August 2020 22nd Sunday Year A

Neither Peter nor we, reading it centuries later, would appreciate being called Satan by Jesus! Jesus had just explained to the disciples that he was destined to suffer grievously and die. In response, Peter had remonstrated with him, arguing that this must not happen. But, after all, Peter wanted the best for Jesus; he didn't want him to suffer and die. Perhaps Peter, more than anybody else, was also acutely worried that if the master suffered passion and death, then the fate of the disciples would be no better.

Peter was a fisherman and for him life was to be enjoyed to the full. For his family and for himself he dreamt of a life without much pain. Suffering was not in his wish list. Later in Matthew's gospel (19:27) we find Peter asking Jesus, "We have left everything to follow you! What then will there be for us?" Having given up so much, Peter expected a better life by being in the company of Jesus.

No wonder the gospel projects Peter as a stumbling block in the earthly life of Jesus. Whenever Jesus mentioned his passion and death Peter tried to stop him even from talking about it. "Never, Lord!" Peter said. "This shall never happen to you." Yet Peter gave the most faith-filled and insightful answer to Jesus's question, "Who do you say that I am?" But Peter disappointed Jesus several times. One moment we see him

saying insightful things about Jesus and the very next moment the contrary.

Peter reminds us of the current culture. We want only pleasure and not pain. Suffering is certainly not in our wish list either. We ourselves don't want to suffer. We don't want our children to suffer or to experience hardship or disappointment.

But suffering is not something to be avoided. Jesus is very clear when he teaches us: "If anyone wants to follow me let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow me." So, as his followers, suffering is to be expected and faced. It is to be endured with faith and hope. And, when it is, it can be a source of grace and redemption.

We have the example of Peter himself and the apostles, all of whom, except John, surrendered their very lives in suffering and martyrdom in witness to their faith in Christ's death and resurrection. So too have many Christians through the ages, including our present age, suffered persecution and suffering on account of their faith.

While we are not called to suffer martyrdom as they did, we are called to follow Jesus through thick and thin, in good times and in hard, facing whatever suffering besets us in our lives with faith and hope.

Manoj Kunnath CSsR

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