

**June 25, 2017 – 12th Sunday of Ordinary Time -- Year A**  
***A See-Saw of Fears and Loving Care***

Odd, isn't it?

There seems to be a similarity among the four Scripture readings today.

It seems like they start with one sentiment but then change to another.

It's a bit like a see-saw.

Our first reading is about Jeremiah who was a prophet when the Israelites were under attack by the Babylonians.

Jeremiah prophesied some bad news ... the Babylonians were going to conquer the Israelites!

That put Jeremiah in a very bad light to the Israeli leaders.

In today's reading he starts by complaining about all this.

The second half of the reading begins with "But" and the sentiment changes.

"But the LORD is with me"

Jeremiah regains his confidence and his mood changes to rejoicing.

Yes, it's a bit of a see-saw.

We start with discouragement and end with confidence.

We begin with fears and end with trusting God.

The situation changes as Jeremiah speaks about God and for God.

Ps 69 has a similar shift.

"For your sake I bear insult, and shame covers my face."

Again, we start with discouragement and receiving insults.

By the end of the psalm the psalmist is singing:

"See, you lowly ones, and be glad;

You who seek God, may your hearts revive!

For the LORD hears the poor."

It's that see-saw sentiment again.

Personal problems and complaints at the beginning.

Help from the Lord brings on praises at the end.

St. Paul's words for the Romans also change the sentiments.

St. Paul starts by speaking of Adam and Moses and how sin pervaded the nation.

Sin right from the get-go - Adam and generations to come ... even to now.

In the see-saw action this time the reading acknowledges God's grace.

"... the grace of God and the gracious gift of the one man Jesus Christ"

The contrast: sin versus the grace of God.

That amazing grace of God,

the mercy of God,

and the love of God are shown to all people with the coming of Christ.

In today's portion of the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus is preparing the Apostles to go out on a mission and to preach to others about Jesus.

Jesus starts by telling the Apostles:

"Fear no one."

"Do not be afraid of those who can kill."

Wow!

Is that the way to get evangelists all psyched up to go out and preach?

But, then the see-saw.

God knows all ... like how many hairs are on your head.

God knows the Apostles and cares so very much for them.

As Jesus tells them, "You are worth more than many sparrows!"

The Apostles and we here today are learning how much God cares for us.

We **hear that message** and **believe that message** here and now, this very day, because we have heard Easter stories so recently. We have heard the whole story of Jesus:  
 suffering for us,  
 dying for us,  
 rising from the dead for us,  
 ascending into heaven for us,  
 and sending the Holy Spirit to us.

If God cares so much for us then we, in turn, should care what God knows about us and what God thinks we should do.

Just as people in the Bible have done, we bring our fears, our problems and our concerns to the Lord.

And we have lots of those:

We had a power outage Thursday evening ... when would it come back?

In the last two weeks we had the sadness due to the deaths of parish members:

We had the death of Dcn Al - our deacon of many years, the carpenter who made our altar, our ambo, our Christmas stable, and many other items

We had the death of Connie Rucker -

the mom of 11 children,

the grandmother of 37

The great grandmother of 59

The great-great grandmother of 17

We have had illness impacting our parish and our families

Roy Ford, who works as an usher, a church decorator, a  
hospitality worker, a baptismal font maintainer

Beryl Harriott, a long-time and very active member who has worked in  
liturgy planning, EME training, evangelization and many other parish  
ministries

Personally, I have a brother who is having a serious bladder  
infection

***Yes, these are just some of the many concerns that weigh us down  
here on the see-saw.*** [put lighter jug on the left end of see-saw]

Today's readings tell us to overcome these feelings, to balance these  
feelings by trusting in a God: [put heavier jug on other end of see-saw]

who knows us down to the nitty gritty,  
who cares about us,  
who loves us,  
who has mercy on us,  
who has our backside, the long-term, the ultimate backside  
and who gives us the graces that we need in our real, down to  
earth lives.

**May we continue to come to God, over and over again, so that our  
caring God, our loving God can over-balance these facts of life.**

After we come to the Lord, then we can be like those who went on the  
mission trip to Pennsylvania last week:

- they showed by their actions that they cared about the people
- They showed by their paint brushes, their hammers and nails,  
their smiles and their listening that they would help them out.

After we come to the Lord, then we can speak up to others about the Lord

- we know the Lord cares
- we can let others know that very truth as well

After we come to the Lord, then we can do like the St. Francis of Assisi in Ann Arbor did, and bring food to share with others.

After we come to the Lord , then we can go door-to-door to tell others

- how much God cares about them
- how much we care about them
- how we would warmly welcome them here in our midst
- how we would care for them with summer camps, little libraries, events in the parish, organizations within the parish, and especially in our liturgies.

In conclusion:

We have our:

- fears
- complaints
- sins
- doubts

*And they are more than balanced out by God's:*

- love
- care
- mercy
- grace

