

Homily 12th Sunday in Ordinary Time (A) 2026

Don Giuseppe was my Parish Priest in Italy when I was in major seminary. He was a very wise priest and back in 1973 told me, 'John, there are many priests and teachers in The Church but what we lack are God called authentic and fearless prophets!' He himself was such a prophet.

Many might argue that The Prophetic Age finished with John the Baptist yet Christ himself, in the New Dispensation, was a fearless Prophet who spoke out on his Father's behalf through the power of The Holy Spirit. In The Early Church both in Jerusalem and in Antioch, according to last Thursday's First Reading Acts 13:1-3, '...in the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen, a lifelong friend of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.'

The Prophetic Mission by its very nature is a dangerous one with many risks and almost always involves suffering and rejection of the prophet by those in power. When Jeremiah, in today's First Reading, speaks out against a corrupt King and Religious Leaders he is cast out and laments, 'I hear many whispering. Terror is on every side! "Denounce him! Let us denounce him!", say all my close friends, watching for my fall.' * Jeremiah however remains steadfast in his prophesying and defiantly cries out, 'But the LORD is with me; therefore, my persecutors will stumble; they will not overcome me. They will be greatly shamed, for they will not succeed. For Yahweh delivers the needy from the hands of evildoers.'

The Responsorial Psalm continues this prophetic theme of rejection and persecution as the Psalmist defends the righteous man, the prophet, who calls out to God, Yahweh, 'It is for you that I suffer taunts, that shame has covered my face. To my own kin I have become an outcast, a stranger to the children of my mother.'

Today's Second Reading reminds us that we are all sinners, like Adam, in need of God's mercy and forgiveness through Jesus' Passion and death on the Cross. Don Giuseppe also reminded me, 'John, the first step to holiness is to humbly accept that you are a poor sinner before God.' It was in that poverty of spirit and humility that he himself spoke out when faced with injustice, hypocrisy and corruption....

In Matthew 10 today Jesus, trusting in and knowing that his Father 'Abba' was with him encourages today's Church prophets to speak out, 'Have no fear of those who abuse and persecute you...Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul...' Jesus is uncompromising in the command that his disciples 'call out' injustice, immorality, inequality, hypocrisy, corruption, opulence and power....

It is not surprising that dignitaries were very thin in the ground at Don Giuseppe's funeral, but crowds of God's people filled the church and thronged its surrounding precincts. Why? He was a man who passionately practised Jesus' command, 'Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul...' and proclaimed The JOY of The Gospel with compassion, freeing his flock of heavy burdens and proclaiming Jesus 'humble and gentle of heart' whose 'yoke is easy and burden light.' He always sought justice, put himself last and was a servant of all. How stunningly beautiful!

*** Pre-Exilic Prophets (7th–6th century BC)**

Jeremiah

Target: Kings, shepherds (rulers), priests, and false prophets.

Key passages:

- Jeremiah 5:30–31 – Prophets lie and priests rule by their authority.
- Jeremiah 22:13–17 – Condemnation of King Jehoiakim for oppression.
- Jeremiah 23:1–2 – “Woe to the shepherds who destroy and scatter my sheep.” Main Accusations
- Abusing power
- False prophecy
- Leading people into idolatry