



Lenten

Reflections

The Divine Intervention

April 7, 2017

Scripture

Jeremiah 20: 10-13

I hear the whisperings of many:

"Terror on every side!

Denounce! let us denounce him!"

All those who were my friends
are on the watch for any misstep of mine.

"Perhaps he will be trapped; then we can prevail,
and take our vengeance on him."

But the LORD is with me, like a mighty champion:
my persecutors will stumble, they will not triumph.

In their failure they will be put to utter shame,
to lasting, unforgettable confusion.

O LORD of hosts, you who test the just,
who probe mind and heart,

Let me witness the vengeance you take on them,
for to you I have entrusted my cause.

Sing to the LORD,

praise the LORD,

For he has rescued the life of the poor
from the power of the wicked!

Our Scripture Reflection

Poor Jeremiah! He did not want to be God's Prophet. He tried to tell God he was too young, and he didn't know how to speak but God would hear none of it. With great reluctance Jeremiah took up the call and from the first moment his life became a living hell. Name calling, lies, rejection, ostracism, and torture became a part of his daily existence. That's how it is at times if you try to do God's bidding. No wonder St. Teresa of Avila would write a note to God in the midst of her struggles which read, "Dear God, No wonder You have so few friends the way You treat them!" Have you ever felt that way?

Food for your Journey

When God chose to take on human flesh, he did not become a priest or a monk, a king or a general, a poet or a philosopher. Instead, he became a death row prisoner, a condemned criminal executed alongside two thieves. Nothing else would do: The living image of the invisible deity could take no truer form than a "dead man walking," the lowest of the low.

Yet we somehow manage to overlook this central fact of our faith. When we think of Jesus, we prefer the beautiful baby in Mary's arms, the miracle worker, the eloquent preacher or the resurrected Son sitting on a cloud next to his Father. ...

So scandalous is this fact that even our major Bible translations subtly obscure it. Luke 23:32, for instance, is often rendered, "Two other men, both criminals, were also led out with him to be executed," implying a difference between the two thieves and Jesus. But the original Greek text of this verse reads "de kai heteroi kakouroi duo sun auto": "the two other criminals also with him." Thus the evangelist Luke recognized an equivalence between Christ and the thieves that is apparently considered too shocking by modern translators.

For the earliest Christians, however, becoming a prisoner was nothing to be ashamed of. "Whoever serves me must follow me," their Master told them, and virtually all the apostles did time behind bars and were eventually executed by the state — just like Jesus.

— Jens Soering, "The convict Christ: an Easter reflection on the cross and criminal justice," in The PRISM ePistle, March 23, 2005. jenssoering.com. Soering is serving two life sentences for murders he says he didn't commit.

A Prayer from the Heart

Dear Jesus, Help me to carry my cross faithfully as I try to live Your Gospel each day. May I never grow weary or frustrated as I do. Amen.