

Death Isn't the Worst

This Week's Readings at Mass

- ▶ Jeremiah 20:10-13 - Jeremiah's faith in crisis
- ▶ Romans 5:12-15 - Mankind's sin through Adam
- ▶ Matthew 10:26-33 - Reassurance to the Twelve

In this Gospel reading, Jesus is speaking to the apostles immediately after giving them a terrifying task to “cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, and cast out demons” (Mt. 10:8) and to take nothing for their journey: no money, food, or extra clothing.

Naturally, they were likely concerned about not having enough of the basic necessities for such a mission (Mt 10:9-10). Finally, Jesus told them the kicker: “I am sending you out like sheep into the midst of wolves... beware of them, for they will hand you over to councils and flog you in their synagogues; and you will be dragged before governors and kings because of me... and you will be hated by all because of my name” (Mt. 10:17-18, 22). Having heard all these instructions and predictions, we can



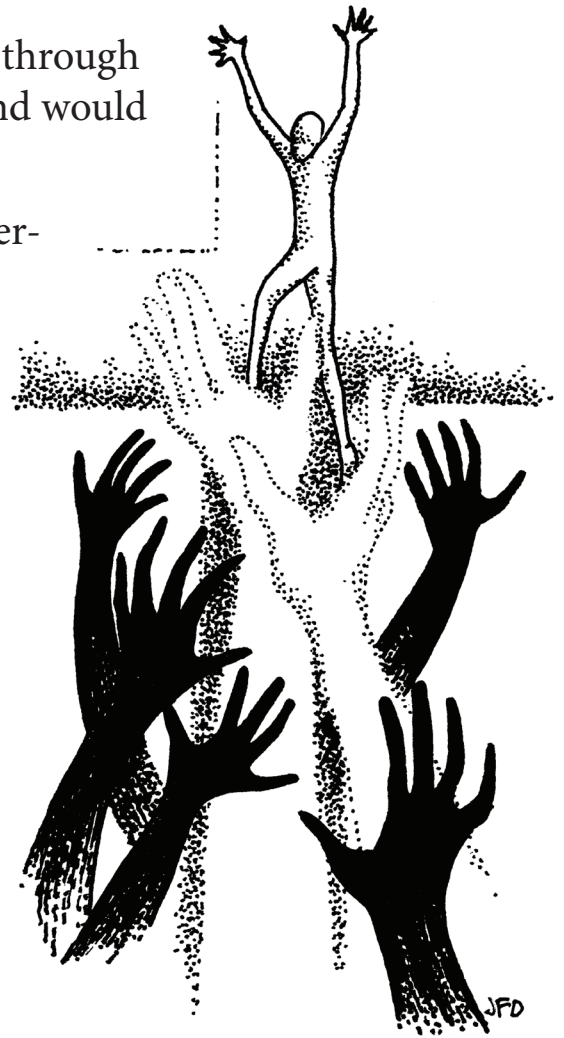
“Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul.”

Sheepish Question:

For what do I need courage (OR wisdom) right now?

imagine the apostles might not have wanted to go through with their mission after all. Who in their right mind would sign up for such a job?

Just when all the apostles may have been reconsidering their mission, Jesus addressed their fears. He told them boldly that they shouldn't fear anyone. He urged them to speak with confidence and strength. He reminded them that they are worth far more than two song birds who are known, watched over, and cared for by God. He taught them that the life of their soul is more important than their physical life. He put their physical worries and fears into perspective. Death is not the worst that can happen, so they do not need to live in fear. Instead, they can go out to proclaim Jesus' message and live in confidence and trust that God will watch over them, until, through, and beyond their death.



Questions of the Week

- ① Think about a time in the past when you were fearful of following Jesus' lead because of some real or imagined hardships it would entail. What did you do? What happened?
- ② Is there something worrisome or scary you are being invited to do in your life now? Does it help your resolve to hear Jesus' assurances of God's care for you? Why or why not?