

**First reading Jeremiah 38:4-6, 8-10**

**‘You bore me, a man of contention to the whole land.’**

In those days: The officials said to the king, ‘Let this man, Jeremiah, be put to death, for he is weakening the hands of the soldiers who are left in this city, and the hands of all the people, by speaking such words to them. For this man is not seeking the welfare of this people, but their harm.’ King Zedekiah said, ‘Behold, he is in your hands, for the king can do nothing against you.’ So they took Jeremiah and cast him into the cistern of Malchiah, the king’s son, which was in the court of the guard, letting Jeremiah down by ropes. And there was no water in the cistern, but only mud, and Jeremiah sank in the mud.

Ebed-melech went from the king’s house and said to the king, ‘My lord the king, these men have done evil in all that they did to Jeremiah the prophet by casting him into the cistern, and he will die there of hunger, for there is no bread left in the city.’ Then the king commanded Ebed-melech the Ethiopian, ‘Take thirty men with you from here, and lift Jeremiah the prophet out of the cistern before he dies.’

**Responsorial Psalm 40(39): 2-4, 18. R14b**

**Lord, make haste to help me!**

I waited, I waited for the Lord,  
and he stooped down to me.  
He heard my cry.

He drew me from the deadly pit,  
from the miry clay.  
He set my feet upon a rock,  
made my footsteps firm.

He put a new song into my mouth,  
praise of our God.  
Many shall see and fear  
and shall trust in the Lord.

Wretched and poor though I am,  
the Lord is mindful of me.  
You are my rescuer, my help;  
O my God, do not delay.

**Second reading Hebrews 12:1-4**

**‘Let us run with endurance the race that is set before us.’**

Brothers and Sisters: Since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or faint-hearted. In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood.

**Gospel Acclamation John 10:27**

**Alleluia, alleluia.**

My sheep hear my voice, says the Lord,  
and I know them, and they follow me.

**Alleluia.**

**Gospel Luke 12:49-53**

**‘I have not come to give peace but division.’**

At that time: Jesus said to his disciples, ‘I came to cast fire on the earth, and would that it were already kindled! I have a baptism to be baptised with, and how great is my distress until it is accomplished! Do you think that I have come to give peace on earth? No, I tell you, but rather division. For from now on in one house there will be five divided: three against two and two against three. They will be divided, father against son and son against father; mother against daughter and daughter against mother; mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law, and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law.’

Copyright: The readings are from the Jerusalem Bible published by Darton, Longman & Todd, Ltd 2019

**Feast Days this week**

**Tuesday 19th August:** St John Eudes

**Wednesday 20th August:** St Bernard

**Thursday 21st August:** St Pius X

**Friday 22nd August:** Our Lady Mother and Queen

**Saturday 23rd August:** St Rose of Lima

## The Cycle of Prayer

### A Deeper Understanding between Christians and Jews

**Prayer**

Let us pray also for the Jewish people,  
to who the Lord our God spoke first,  
that he may grant them to advance in love of his name  
and in faithfulness to his covenant.

Almighty ever-living God,  
who bestowed your promises on Abraham and his  
descendants,

graciously hear the prayers of your Church,  
that the people you first made your own  
may attain the fullness of redemption.

Roman Missal

**Peace and Division**

*“Do you think that I am come to bring peace on earth?” Quite honestly, we would hope so. We’ve come to equate Jesus with peace; is he not the Prince of Peace? The Communion Rite links him with peace; the discourse at the Last Supper is peppered with the word. Yet, when he answers his own question, he confuses us. “No. I tell you, but rather division.”*

*We look at the life of Jesus for clues as to how “peace” and “division” can be reconciled. One approach is to find Jesus exercising options in his life; facing moments when he has a choice of two roads ?” the easy pliant one of the prevailing culture or the lonely reforming one. His decisions cause divisions. Some of the division and turmoil is within himself (the garden scene.) some between himself and others ?” his mother and relatives. Peter on the road to Jerusalem, the final divisiveness of the cross of scandal.*

*Each time Jesus decides to follow the Father’s will, that has two effects. It divides him off from those who won’t take the step with him, and it moves him deeper into the peace that comes from being true to who you are. The peace Jesus talks about has a shape to it. It is not the wishy-washy, compromising, anything-for-a-quiet-life kind of peace we often settle for. When he mentions “division” in the same breath, we begin to see division as almost the price of authentic peace. We could spend time going through the decisions of Jesus. He reached out; he had compassion; he suffered along with people; he understood their pain; he broke bread with the hungry; he befriended the poor and sinners; he was at ease with the little, working poor people who lived in the shadow of the powerful elite.*

*The problem is that while we’ve read and heard these scenes a thousand times, we’ve lost sight of how disruptive and unconventional Jesus was. He talked of Samaritans saving Jewish lives! He praised the father who embraced the son who shamed him! You were to share your cloak and tunic, all you wore, literally! The soldier in the occupying army was to be accompanied not just the one mile but another mile, unbidden.*

*Jesus parted company with the authorities, not because he wished to but because they did. His warm, open-handed approach to others provoked in the authorities an angry, clench-fisted reaction. To preserve the status quo they would have to be rid of this challenging presence. The crucifixion was meant to silence him for good. Instead, it gave him the last word. It not only capped his life of sacrifice but raised up an iconic sign to inspire us over the centuries. The sacrificed life of Jesus shows the price to be paid if we are to reach the peace he calls us to.*

*[associationofcatholicpriests.ie](http://associationofcatholicpriests.ie)*