

**First reading Jeremiah 20:10-13**

**‘He has delivered the life of the needy from the hand of evildoers.’**

Jeremiah said: I hear many whispering.  
Terror is on every side!

‘Denounce him! Let us denounce him!’ say all my close friends, watching for my fall.

‘Perhaps he will be deceived; then we can overcome him and take our revenge on him.’

But the Lord is with me as a dread warrior; therefore my persecutors will stumble; they will not overcome me.

They will be greatly shamed, for they will not succeed.  
Their eternal dishonour will never be forgotten.

O Lord of hosts, who tests the righteous, who sees the heart and the mind, let me see your vengeance upon them, for to you have I committed my cause.

Sing to the Lord; praise the Lord!

For he has delivered the life of the needy from the hand of evildoers.

**Responsorial Psalm 69(68): 8-10,14, 17, 33-35 R14**

**In your great mercy, answer me, O Lord.**

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.

Zeal for your house consumes me,  
and taunts against you fall on me.

But I pray to you, O Lord,  
at an acceptable time.

In your great mercy, answer me, O God,  
with your faithful salvation.

Lord, answer, for your mercy is kind;  
in your great compassion, turn towards me.

The poor when they see it will be glad,  
and God-seeking hearts will revive;

for the Lord attends to the needy,  
and does not spurn his own in their chains.

Let the heavens and the earth give him praise,  
the seas and everything that moves in them.

**Second reading Romans 5: 12-15**

**‘The free gift is not like the trespass.’**

Brothers and Sisters: Just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned — for sin indeed was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not counted where there is no law. Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sinning was not like the transgression of Adam, who was a type of the one who was to come.

But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if many died through one man’s trespass, much more have the grace of God and the free gift by the grace of that one man, Jesus Christ, abounded for many.

**Gospel Acclamation John 15: 26,27**

**Alleluia, alleluia.**

The Spirit of truth will bear witness about me, says the Lord, and you also will bear witness.

**Alleluia.**

**Gospel Matthew 10: 26-33**

**‘Do not fear those who kill the body.’**

At that time: Jesus instructed his Apostles: ‘Have no fear of them, for nothing is covered that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known. What I tell you in the dark, say in the light, and what you hear whispered, proclaim on the housetops. And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell. Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father knowing. But even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not, therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows. So everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven, but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven.’

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**Feast days this week**

**Monday 22nd June:** Sts John Fisher and Thomas More

**Tuesday 23rd June:** St Etheldreda

**Wednesday 24th June:** The Nativity of St John the Baptist

**Saturday 27th June:** St Cyril of Alexandria

**Cycle of Prayer****Human Life**

especially on the Day for Life (3rd Sunday in June)

**Background**

The origins of the Day for Life are found in St John Paul II's encyclical *Evangelium Vitae*. Preparation for the day is shared with the Bishops' Conferences of Ireland and of Scotland — though each marks the day on a different date. Since its inception it has focussed on a wide range of life issues.

**Prayer**

*O God, our past and future hope,  
to you a thousand years are like yesterday,  
come and gone.*

*Teach us to see the world through your eyes,  
to recognise the faults of the past,  
and, however dimly, to see the future with hope.*

*Let us seek out the places of hurt  
where we can offer your love and compassion.*

*Find the places of darkness and despair  
where your mercy can bring light and comfort.*

*May we be heralds of a new world  
where every human life is treated with dignity,  
where all can live and have abundant life.*

***A prophetic people***

*Today's first reading reminds us of the trials of the prophet Jeremiah, and the Gospel speaks of our duty of witnessing to Christ in the world – both reminders that all members of the People of God are potentially prophetic and that all should play some part in handing on the truth about God. In a sense, we are all successors to Jeremiah and to the apostles whose job it was to share Christ's message with the world.*

*Not all Christians have equal opportunities of being spokespersons for God. Bishops and priests have the official duty of encouraging and teaching the faithful. Their difficult but worthwhile task is to faithfully hand on Christ's teaching, and correct errors that threaten the integrity of the traditional Christian doctrine or ethical standards. Like Jeremiah and other Old Testament prophets, they remind their people of God's revealed will and of the high moral standards God asks of us. And, like the prophets, priests can often expect criticism and opposition, just for doing their job.*

*Theologians too have an important work to fulfil in the Church, to deeply study the revealed truth, and then blend that traditional teaching with modern knowledge, so as to honestly apply the Christian message to new problems. To help them in this daunting work they have the light of the same Holy Spirit who guided the prophets of old, provided they do their research not as masters but as servants of the word of God. But it is not only priests and theologians who have the prophetic role towards God's people. The Second Vatican Council taught that every Christian should give a living witness to Christ, at least through living a life of faith and charity and by joining in worship and prayer.*

*This is not such an easy matter. The spirit of today's society, the example of our contemporaries, and the irreligious mood of much of the media do not always foster God-fearing attitudes or encourage sound moral standards. In most countries today, Christians are not persecuted for showing faith in Christ and his Gospel, but when she or he lives according to this teaching they will be swimming against the tide of a materialistic culture and will not find the going easy. Jesus warns that being a Christian will cost sacrifice and suffering. We are bound to face opposition from a world that does not gladly submit to the word of God, that makes so many demands on human nature. But there is real satisfaction, too, in standing up for the truth of things. In the centre of their souls, prophetic people have the happiness of working with the Lord, who is the ultimate truth on whom we all depend.*

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