

Do Not Be Afraid

12th Sunday in Ordinary Time
Cycle A | June 21, 2026

WISDOM FROM THE CELLS

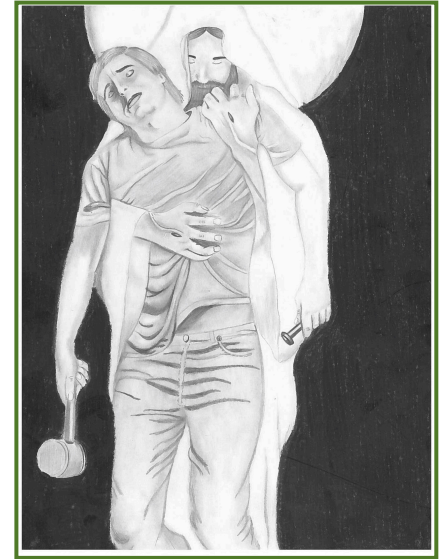
I can help Jesus succeed in his mission by trying to help those who are going down the same path I once took and by sharing my life experiences when I was on the path of no return, as I call it. I want to show people that not everyone in prison stays bad; some of us can change into people of faith, and some of us will learn that our old lifestyles are what put us here.

For me, it started by attending groups. I remember when I attended my first retreat. I allowed myself to be vulnerable to share something deep with others. I always thought being vulnerable made you weak, but it is the exact opposite. It feels like a huge weight leaves your back.

Through our writings, meditating, and group sharing, I can understand the pain I have caused my victims and their families. I've learned that the only way to begin healing yourself is to talk about it with others going through it with you and through prayer. God gives to all who ask him.

I feel like I am one more step closer to healing my wounds and letting go of all anger and bitterness. I know the road is going to be long and hard in prison, but with God's grace and the help of those around me, I will finish the road before me.

-Steven, who is in a California State Prison.



Drawing by Ronnie Reaza

PENITENTIAL RITE

Lord, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins and bring us to everlasting life.

R. Amen.

OPENING PRAYER

Let us pray:

Lord,

We have experienced much grace and forgiving mercy from you, and your Son Jesus has brought us an unforgettable message of joy. May our very lives bear witness that Jesus walks by our side and help us never be afraid of proclaiming our hope and trusting faith in you.

We ask this through Christ, our Lord. **R. Amen.**



LITURGY OF THE WORD

First Reading: Jeremiaiah 20:10-13

Jeremiah said: "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!"

The Word of the Lord.
R. Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 69:8-10, 14, 17, 33-35

R. Lord, in your great love, answer me.

For your sake I bear insult,
and shame covers my face.

I have become an outcast to my brothers,
a stranger to my mother's children,
Because zeal for your house consumes me,
and the insults of those who blaspheme you
fall upon me.

R. Lord, in your great love, answer me.

I pray to you, O LORD,
for the time of your favor, O God!
In your great kindness answer me
with your constant help.

Answer me, O LORD, for bounteous is your
kindness;

in your great mercy turn toward me.

R. Lord, in your great love, answer me.

"See, you lowly ones, and be glad;
you who seek God, may your hearts revive!
For the LORD hears the poor,
and his own who are in bonds he spurns not.
Let the heavens and the earth praise him,
the seas and whatever moves in them!"

R. Lord, in your great love, answer me.

Second Reading: Romans 5:12-15

Brothers and sisters: Through one man sin entered the world, and through sin, death, and thus death came to all men, inasmuch as all sinned—for up to the time of the law, sin was in the world, though sin is not accounted when there is no law. But death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who did not sin after the pattern of the trespass of Adam, who is the type of the one who was to come. But the gift is not like the transgression. For if by the transgression of the one the many died, how much more did the grace of God and the gracious gift of the one man Jesus Christ overflow for the many.

The Word of the Lord.
R. Thanks be to God.

Gospel: Matthew 10:26-33

Jesus said to the Twelve: "Fear no one. Nothing is concealed that will not be revealed, nor secret that will not be known. What I say to you in the darkness, speak in the light; what you hear whispered, proclaim on the housetops. And do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather, be afraid of the one who can destroy both soul and body in Gehenna. Are not two sparrows sold for a small coin? Yet not one of them falls to the ground without your Father's knowledge. Even all the hairs of your head are counted. So do not be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows. Everyone who acknowledges me before others I will acknowledge before my heavenly Father. But whoever denies me before others, I will deny before my heavenly Father."

The Gospel of the Lord.

R. Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.



MEDITATION: MISSION

*(through the eyes
of peter)*

every day
more and more people
were approaching us
it was clear that
we could not continue
as we had been doing

this morning
again we met
for the final time
before we left
for the villages

i was sitting
next to jesus
we were seated
around in a circle
he used the sand
and drew places
where the majority
of the people
were coming from
jesus seemed happy

this morning
he sensed
we were ready to
leave this circle and
go to the places
he had drawn
on the sand

i was going to
travel with john
then we would all
meet back here
in one week
how were people
going to react to us?
what were we

going to say?

jesus turns to us
and says
do not be afraid
travel simply
and trust in my abba
that you will be cared
for each one of us
had our traveling bag
before us
i started to empty it
only keeping
what was necessary

my abba
will be with you
trust him
let go of securities
this is not going
to be easy
being accustomed
to our routine
of these months

your lives are about
something bigger

jesus
went around
to each of us
laid hands on
our heads
and prayed
i will never forget
that experience

it felt like my life
had meaning
like i could venture
forth and bring
jesus' good news
to others

to see the light
in darkness

i felt power and
the spirit flowing
from jesus' hands
listening as
he prayed to his abba
that we be surrounded
and protected with
this commissioning
lighting our hearts
on fire

we talked about
what was going
to be the biggest
challenge and
how we would
need to depend
on each other
we could not
do it alone
jesus talked about
when he first
left nazareth
about his fears
and the challenges
that faced him
along the way

there was something
about jesus
i had not seen before

this deep desire
that moved him
to leave
all the security
of nazareth
to risk everything
animated him

then we embraced
each other
saying goodbye

i walked with john
never thought
i would be anything
but a fisherman
but here i was
walking to
bring god's love
to villages nearby

it almost seemed
like it was too much
i was reflecting
on jesus' prayer
over us
to trust his abba
that we would
be cared for
people would soon
bring us their sick
people will want us
to work wonders
but what would we do?

i was letting
jesus' words
letting go
sink deep within me
i knew i was ready
for this adventure
to be sent with
an empty bag
trusting in his abba
i am no longer afraid



REFLECTION: I remember a time it was hard to trust in God through a difficult time... I remember...
I remember...

OUR FATHER

Let us pray with confidence to the Father
in the words our Savior gave us:

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy Kingdom come,
thy will be done
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our trespasses
as we forgive those who trespass against us,
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.**

**R. For the kingdom, the power and the glory
are yours, now and for ever. Amen.**

SIGN OF PEACE

Jesus, you said to your apostles: "I leave you
peace, my peace I give you. Look not on our
sins, but on the faith of your Church, and
grant us the peace and unity of your kingdom
where you live forever and ever. **Amen.**

The peace of the Lord be with you always.
R. And with your spirit.

LAMB OF GOD

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world:
Have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world:
Have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world:
Grant us peace.

This is Jesus, the Lamb of God, who takes away
the sins of the world. Happy are we who are called
to his supper.

**Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter
under my roof, but only say the word and my
soul shall be healed.**

COMMUNION

CLOSING PRAYER

Let us pray:

Lord,

You tell your disciples to fear no one and not to be
afraid when they face difficulties in their mission.
As we experience difficulties in our own lives, help
us bear witness to you by our words and the way
we live. Give us the courage to respond with trust
to your love.

We ask this through Christ, our Lord. **R. Amen.**

