

Encountering the Word

with Jeff Cavins

Twelfth Sunday in Ordinary Time (A)

Jeremiah 20:10–13 • Romans 5:12–15 • Matthew 10:26–33



Be Not Afraid



Jeremiah by Michelangelo

The readings for this Sunday remind us that proclaiming the truth of the Gospel often provokes opposition, yet the call to witness remains. Jeremiah suffered ridicule and threats for speaking God's Word, but he declared with confidence that his persecutors would not prevail. His assurance rested not in his own strength but in God's faithfulness!

St. Paul builds on this by teaching that, through Christ, grace has entered the world where sin had taken root. This grace strengthens us when fear tempts us to remain silent. The Christian life is not merely about personal comfort or security; it is also

about sharing the life of Christ, even when the world resists.

Jesus himself speaks directly to our fear in the Gospel. He warns his disciples that following him will invite hostility from others, even martyrdom sometimes, but he also assures them of the Father's care. Not even a sparrow falls without the Father's knowledge, and every hair on our head is counted! With such intimate providence, how can we not trust him? The Lord calls us to courage—not bravado, but a quiet confidence rooted in love.

To acknowledge Christ before others is to live and speak in such a way that the truth of the Gospel is unmistakable, and Christ himself will acknowledge us before the Father. However, we can also deny him not only with our words but also with our silence, compromise, or indifference. Each moment of witness, whether in a family conversation, a workplace decision, or a cultural debate, is an opportunity to proclaim that Jesus is Lord.

This courage does not come from us but from the Spirit who dwells within us. When we walk in love, fear loses its grip. To confess Christ publicly is not merely a duty but also a privilege, for when we speak his name before others, he promises to speak ours before the Father.

Living the Gospel

Courage in witness flows from intimacy with Christ. Set aside intentional time this week to deepen your relationship with him through prayer, Scripture, and the sacraments. Ask the Holy Spirit for opportunities to share your faith in both words and deeds, even in small ways. Trust that the same Spirit who emboldened the apostles will also sustain you.

Dive Deeper

Scan this code to watch:



Or go to <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dKzXYOaQL4>

Ponder and Pray

» Jeremiah faced mockery and threats yet stood firm, trusting in God’s call. What fears most often silence you when opportunities arise to witness to your faith? How might God be inviting you to trust his presence more deeply in those moments?

» Jesus assures us that we are more valuable than many sparrows and we’re fully known by the Father. How does reflecting on God’s intimate, fatherly care for you strengthen your courage to proclaim him before others?

» Denial of Christ can happen not only by outright rejection but by silence, passivity, or failing to live authentically. In what areas of your life are you tempted to hide your discipleship? What concrete step could you take this week to live your faith more openly?

Make It Your Own

You and others in your household may use this space to write anything about today’s Mass. It might be your view of Jeff Cavins’s reflection, your priest’s homily, or your answers to the questions on this page—anything to help you and your household get the most of today’s Mass.

“**For if by that one person’s transgression the many died, how much more did the grace of God and the gracious gift of the one person Jesus Christ overflow for the many.**”
—Romans 5:15