

Risk It

*A Missionary Commentary on the
Sunday Readings*

Sunday Readings

Jeremiah 20:7-9

Psalms 63:2, 3-4, 5-6, 8-9

Romans 12:1-2

Matthew 16:21-27

[USCCB link to the Sunday Readings](#)

How much time do we spend “saving our life?” Do we worry and fuss about what we are going to where, how we look, or how we fit in with our family and friends? Perhaps we are preoccupied with what we are going to eat and drink, or the Netflix serial we are binge watching, following our favorite team, or buying the next new thing or experience.

There is a cartoon where two coffee cups are next to each other. One has a plant in it. The other pencils and pens. One says the other, “Do you ever having the feeling that we were meant for something more?”

We know we are meant for something more. We know of the soul thirst the psalmist sings about, or the fire burning in our hearts like the prophet Jeremiah. Saint Augustine was so right when he wrote that “our hearts are restless until they rest in thee.”

All of us hold back from time to time. We are all sinners. Jesus did not. He gave everything, he risked everything, and he believed in us, loved us so much, that he was real with us – no dancing around the truth, blunt, simple, frightening, and freeing. Risking everything for Jesus gives us everything, and more, from Jesus both now and at the end of time.

Missionaries know this risk. Listen to them. You will hear their joy – a joy born of total surrender to the love of God. We empty ourselves; God fills us up so he can pour us out and we thirst no more.

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Notes on the Sunday Readings

First Reading

In this remarkable passage, the prophet Jeremiah gives witness to both his freedom, “I let myself be duped,” and the consuming love of God, “a fire burning in my heart.”

Psalm

We sing, with the Psalmist, our longing for the Lord, like parched land thirsty for water, and the abundance of God’s glory, kindness, and strength so every soul can cling to God and God alone.

Second Reading

St. Paul teaches us to give God everything, our “living sacrifice,” and God will renew our mind and discern God’s will, what is good, pleasing, and perfect.

Gospel

Jesus tells his followers that he must suffer in Jerusalem. Peter pulls him aside to change his mind. Jesus responds forcefully – “get behind me Satan!” God’s ways are not our ways. As followers, we too, deny ourselves, take up our cross, and follow Jesus. All other paths end in death. Only Jesus leads to the fullness of life now and eternal life at the end of time.

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