

Twentieth Sunday in Ordinary Time

August 17, 2025

A prophet for all.

Let us run the race of life.

Set the earth on fire.

-rvb.

Reading 1

Jeremiah 38:4-6, 8-10

In those days, the princes said to the king:

"Jeremiah ought to be put to death;

he is demoralizing the soldiers who are left in this city,

and all the people, by speaking such things to them;

he is not interested in the welfare of our people,

but in their ruin."

King Zedekiah answered: "He is in your power";

for the king could do nothing with them.

And so they took Jeremiah

and threw him into the cistern of Prince Malchiah,

which was in the quarters of the guard,

letting him down with ropes.

There was no water in the cistern, only mud,

and Jeremiah sank into the mud.

Ebed-melech, a court official,

went there from the palace and said to him:

"My lord king,

these men have been at fault

in all they have done to the prophet Jeremiah,

casting him into the cistern.

He will die of famine on the spot,

for there is no more food in the city."

Then the king ordered Ebed-melech the Cushite

to take three men along with him,
and draw the prophet Jeremiah out of the cistern before
he should die.

A reflection, exegesis, and commentary on the scriptures.

The reluctant prophet, Jeremiah proclaims in graphic words, the doom of the king, and urges him to obey the voice of God. Jeremiah's advice reminds us of the repeated message of the Lord about those who save their lives by losing them, and those who lose their lives in finding them. Of course, Jeremiah is thrown into a cistern without water and only mud. He was rescued by Ebed-melech, an Ethiopian eunuch in the king's house who pulled him out with the help of three men. This reading prepares us for the Gospel in which Jesus predicts his passion and death – “**There is a baptism with which I must be baptized, and how great is my anguish until it is accomplished!**”

Do you have the intestinal faith, and fortitude to be a prophet?

Here are 10 ways of a prophet.

+Prophets embrace religion as a way of creating communities of solidarity with justice and suffering.

+They look for where the suffering is and go there, just as Jesus did.

+They speak of solidarity with one God, which also implies union with all else.

+The goal they proclaim is not to prove oneself worthy, innocent, and pure.

+The prophet learns to be for and with, and not against.

+They are for those who are suffering or excluded.

+They are not centered on sin, but on growth, change, and life.

+They know that the best teachers are reality itself and creation.

+They start with judgment but end with divine pity.

+They call forth tears more than anger.

-Richard Rohr, The Tears of Things, 2025, pp. 162-163.

Responsorial Psalm

[Psalm 40:2, 3, 4, 18](#)

R. (14b) Lord, come to my aid!

**I have waited, waited for the LORD,
and he stooped toward me.**

R. Lord, come to my aid!

The LORD heard my cry.

**He drew me out of the pit of destruction,
out of the mud of the swamp;**

he set my feet upon a crag;

he made firm my steps.

R. Lord, come to my aid!

And he put a new song into my mouth,
a hymn to our God.

Many shall look on in awe
and trust in the LORD.

R. Lord, come to my aid!

Though I am afflicted and poor,
yet the LORD thinks of me.

You are my help and my deliverer;

O my God, hold not back!

R. Lord, come to my aid!

Reading 2

Hebrews 12:1-4

Brothers and sisters:

Since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses,
let us rid ourselves of every burden and sin that clings to us
and persevere in running the race that lies before us
while keeping our eyes fixed on Jesus,
the leader and perfecter of faith.

For the sake of the joy that lay before him
he endured the cross, despising its shame,
and has taken his seat at the right of the throne of God.
Consider how he endured such opposition from sinners,
in order that you may not grow weary and lose heart.
In your struggle against sin
you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding blood.

A reflection, exegesis, and commentary on the scriptures.

Since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses,
let us rid ourselves of every burden and sin that clings to us
and persevere in running the race that lies before us
while keeping our eyes fixed on Jesus,
the leader and perfecter of faith.

Who are these great clouds of witnesses? Is it our loved ones who have passed away who are advocates for us, the angels, community of saints – communities who link us with others through time. We discover these connections through religious rituals, special observances, and the occasional surprise. The creation of community reflects a natural and very powerful urge to connect, do good, and change the world by “doing good trouble.” In Psalm 133 we read, “How very good and pleasant it is when kindred live together in unity.” The kinship of everyone in our age of global spirituality recognizes that we have a common stake in the survival of the planet. Mahatma Gandhi explores the ramifications of this perspective: “I believe in the essential unity of all people and for that matter, of all that lives. Therefore, I believe that as one person gains spiritually, the whole world gains, and if one person falls, the world falls to that extent.”

Alleluia

[John 10:27](#)

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

My sheep hear my voice, says the Lord;

I know them, and they follow me.

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel

[Luke 12:49-53](#)

Jesus said to his disciples:

"I have come to set the earth on fire,

and how I wish it were already blazing!

There is a baptism with which I must be baptized,

and how great is my anguish until it is accomplished!

Do you think that I have come to establish peace on the earth?

No, I tell you, but rather division.

From now on a household of five will be divided,

three against two and two against three;

a father will be divided against his son

and a son against his father,

a mother against her daughter

and a daughter against her mother,

a mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law

and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law."

A reflection, exegesis, and commentary on the scriptures.

Like Jesus whose fiery and divisive words came to bring "Good Trouble"

"I have come to set the earth on fire,

and how I wish it were already blazing!

There is a baptism with which I must be baptized,

and how great is my anguish until it is accomplished!

Do you think that I have come to establish peace on the earth?

Who is John Lewis and what is Good Trouble? On Thursday, July 17 thousands of protestors around the country aimed to stir up some "Good Trouble" (and as Jesus said, "I have come to set the earth on fire") — they gathered at [more than 1,600 protests sites](#) across the nation for planned protests against the White House's administration.

The protests were slated to take place on Thursday, July 17, the fifth anniversary of the death of civil rights champion and [Congressman John Lewis](#), who popularized the concept of "Good Trouble," referring to non-violent civil disobedience.

While speaking at the opening of the Library of Congress's Rosa Parks exhibition in 2019, Lewis said: "Rosa Parks inspired us to get in trouble. And I've been getting in trouble ever since. She inspired us to find a way, to get in the way, to get in what I call good trouble, necessary trouble."

Who was John Lewis?

Born in 1940 in Troy, Alabama, John Robert Lewis was a civil rights leader and politician who served in the U.S. House of Representatives from 1987

until 2020, representing Georgia's 5th District, which includes most of Atlanta.

While in Congress, he was known as a staunch civil rights advocate, consistently supporting the renewal and expansion of the Civil Rights Act, including protections for the LGBTQ community.

His lifelong commitment to justice earned him the nickname "the conscience of the Congress," and in 2011, President Barack Obama awarded him the [Presidential Medal of Freedom](#), the highest civilian honor in the United States.

Congressional leaders reveal a postage stamp honoring Civil Rights icon and former U.S. Representative John Lewis at the U.S. Capitol in Washington, U.S. June 21, 2023.

Before joining Congress, Lewis was one of the key leaders in Martin Luther King Jr.'s civil rights movement. Despite his young age, he was one of the "Big Six" leaders of the movement.

He chaired the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, organized some of the major demonstrations then, and, at age 23, became the

youngest speaker on the 1963 March on Washington, where King delivered his "I Have a Dream" speech.

As an activist, [Lewis was arrested more than 40 times](#), always carrying the message of his famous quote: "Never, ever be afraid to make some noise and get in good trouble, necessary trouble."

He died at the age of 80, on July 17, 2020, after being diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. -Internet. In these unsettled and dangerous times, we need more of the ilk of John Lewis.

Final prayer: God, as we run the race of life, may your Holy Spirit help us to fix our eyes on your son, Jesus. Shower us with the grace of courage to be prophets who confront the social injustices of our world; "to set the earth on fire." Amen.