

**OUR LADY STAR OF THE SEA, MUMBLES**  
**Reflection for**  
**Twelfth Sunday in Ordinary Time, June 21, 2020**  
**(May be used for Home Prayer Service)**  
**Dominican Friars, Swansea**

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*This reflection may be used during the home prayer service. Please see the home prayer service sheet for details.*

**GOD CARES FOR THE SUFFERING THROUGH US**

The Responsorial Psalm (Ps 69) of today could be applied to understand the practical message of today's readings. It expresses the anguish of an innocent person who endures persecution, oppression and suffering from their society. Ultimately, the Psalmist places all hope and trust in the Lord who alone can lift one out of the pit of despair and restore one's hope.

**Jeremiah: The Suffering Prophet:** The plight of Prophet Jeremiah was no different from that of the Psalmist. He warned the people of Israel of the impending doom that would befall them, but they would not listen to him. He, like the Psalmist, also underwent persecution, oppression and suffering from his own kindred. He suffered all these because he was called as a Prophet and he chose to stand for the truth. In standing for the truth, he was not afraid of his hearers but of God who called him and sent him on mission. In his suffering, he emptied his heart to God in hopeful prayer (cf. Jer 20:10-13).

**The Persecution, Oppression and Suffering of our Time:** Like Jeremiah's time, persecution, oppression and suffering are not strange to us. Some face persecution in their marriages. Some are persecuted for their faith. Some are suffering because of the uneven distribution of wealth in the world. Many suffer from ill-health. Others feel oppressed by the people they work with or live with. Many people also suffer discrimination because of their race or ethnic background. It also grieves our hearts that the society in which we live is gradually drifting away from the worship of God. Thus, the unhappy and unjust situations we experience in our world make us lament like the Psalmist and Jeremiah. In the face of all these daunting challenges, we pray that God will satisfy the longings of all who hunger and thirst for justice (cf. Mt 5:6).

**The Good and Humanitarian Samaritan:** In the parable of the Good Samaritan (Lk 10:25-37), Christ presents us with the story of a man who fell into the hands of brigands. While the priest and the Levite 'passed by the other side',

it was a Samaritan who 'stopped' to show him human compassion. Many of our neighbours have also fallen into the painful hands of poverty, insecurity, discrimination, ill-health, marriage failures, loneliness and depression. Our mission in the world as Christians is not to 'pass by' in indifference but to 'stop' and take care of them. Through our confident witnessing to the power of Christ living in us, we can alleviate their suffering. Those are involved in the alleviation of poverty and human suffering could be said to be doing the "Good Samaritan" work (John Paul II, *Salvifici Doloris*, 1984).

**Do not be Afraid:** The Samaritan risked his life in stopping to check on the wounded man. He could have been robbed and physically assaulted himself, but he did not consider the risks involved. Rather, he stopped, sympathised with, and supported a fellow human who needed help. There are many dangers which lie in caring for human lives. Jesus is aware of these and that was why he assured us that no spiritual evil will befall us while caring for others. The risks we face in serving God may hurt us physically, but they do not have effect on our souls. Christ speaks to us: do not be afraid.

Today, we remember the health workers who have died while caring for Covid-19 patients. May their souls find rest with God. May God also fill with this grace those who are still involved in this heroic duty. May they not be afraid.

Many people in the world are also deeply involved in humanitarian services; in the alleviation of poverty and suffering in the world. May the power of Christ renew your strength. Christ speaks to you: Do not be afraid.

For those who are undergoing either physical or emotional suffering at this moment, the message of today is that God is aware of what you are going through. There may tears in the night, but joy comes with dawn (Ps 30). You are of great value to God. He will never deprive you of the care and guidance you need at each moment to overcome your present challenges. You shall be victorious. Do not be afraid. Amen.