

God's words in today's first reading point us beyond prophet Jeremiah to JESUS. Like Jeremiah, Jesus was consecrated in the womb and sent as a "prophet to the nations". Like the prophets before Him, Jesus too faces hostility, because he is just "the son of Joseph."

The sign He gives them is that of the prophets Elijah and Elisha. From their colorful careers Jesus draws two stories. In each, the prophets bypass "many . . . in Israel" to bestow God's blessings on non-Israelites who had faith that the prophets were men of God. "None . . . not one" in Israel was found deserving, Jesus emphasizes.

They know He's likening them to the "many . . . in Israel" in the days of the prophets who were not in God's favor. That's why they try to shove Him off the cliff. As He promised to protect Jeremiah, the Lord delivers Jesus from those who would crush Him. And as were Elijah and Elisha, Jesus is sent to proclaim God's gift of salvation—not exclusively to one nation or people, but to all who realize in faith that from the womb God alone is their hope, their rescuer, their "rock of refuge." In Jesus, the word of the prophets has been brought to perfection, fulfilled in those who have ears to hear, as He declares in today's Gospel. May we pray for God's blessings on us as we prepare to accept Jesus as our savior and master in the holy Eucharist!

*Fr. Michael Jeeva Antony*



Las palabras de Dios en la primera lectura de hoy, nos dirige por encima del profeta Jeremías a JESÚS. Como Jeremías, Jesús Jesús fue consagrado en el vientre y mandado como un "profeta a las naciones". Como los profetas antes que El, Jesús también enfrenta hostilidad, porque el solo era el "hijo de José".

La señal que Él les da es que los profetas Elías y Eliseo, desde sus coloridas carreras Jesús dibuja dos historias. En cada uno de ellos, los profetas pasaron "muchos.... En Israel" se otorgaron las bendiciones de Dios sobre lo no israelitas quienes tuvieron fe que los profetas eran hombres de Dios. "Nadie... ninguno" en Israel fue encontrado merecedor, Jesús enfatizó.

Ellos sabían que le caen bien a Jesús "muchos.... En Israel" en los días de los profetas quienes no estaban en el favor de Dios. Eso es por lo cual ellos trataron de arrojarlo al barranco. Así como El prometió proteger a Jeremías, el Señor libero a Jesús de aquellos que querían dañarlo. Y del mismo modo que a Elías y Eliseo, Jesús fue enviado a proclamar el regalo de Dios de la Salvación—no exclusivamente a una nación o a un pueblo, sino a todos los que entiendan en fe que del vientre de Dios es su esperanza, su rescatador, su "roca y refugio". En Jesús, la palabra de los profetas se trajo a la perfección, cumplida en aquellos quienes tienen oídos y escuchan, como el declara en el Evangelio de hoy. Oremos por las bendiciones de Dios sobre nosotros mientras nos preparamos para aceptar a Jesús como nuestro salvador y maestro en la Santa Eucaristía!

*Padre Miguel Jeeva Antony*

## UPCOMING RETREATS:

**MARRIAGE ENCOUNTER WEEKEND** — The next Marriage Encounter Weekend is **April 12-14 (2019)** at Powell Butte Retreat Ctr. (Powell Butte, OR—near Bend). Learn how to once again foster **COMMUNICATION AND RENEWAL IN YOUR MARRIAGE!** For more information call 503-853-2758 or apply on-line at [www.rediscoverthepark.org](http://www.rediscoverthepark.org).

**Did you know that couples who attend a Worldwide Marriage encounter (WWME) Weekend:**

- Experience only a 2% divorce rate
- Live the true meaning of the Sacrament of Marriage
- Become more involved in their church
- Renew the Church through discipleship with other couples

**HEALING AND WHOLENESS AFTER ABORTION** — Winter holidays are traditionally a time of reflection, and those who have lost children to abortion are reminded of the loss, the regrets, the if-onlys. Decide now that it is time for hope and healing — why wait any longer to heal? Experience a Rachel's Vineyard Retreat, **February 15-17 (2019) in Portland, or March 15-17 (2019) in Medford.** It's a SAFE, Confidential, and Compassionate environment! For more info call: 541-942-2861, or email: [projectaurora@aol.com](mailto:projectaurora@aol.com), or visit the national website: [www.project-aurora.org](http://www.project-aurora.org).

**LOOKING FOR A FRESH TAKE ON THE MASS READINGS?** — Join Eugene Catholic Young Adults' (ECYA) on Thursday evenings, **6:45pm**, in St. Mary Parish Center (1062 Charnelton St.). ECYA is for everyone, ages 21-39. For more info. and other events coming up, contact: [eugeneyoungadults@gmail.com](mailto:eugeneyoungadults@gmail.com) (541-270-9329) & [facebook.com/EugeneCYA](https://www.facebook.com/EugeneCYA).

..... ALSO — *Theology on Tap* every 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday at the K of C Hall .....

**HOSPICE OF SACRED HEART** — Caring men and women needed to provide practical help and emotional assistance to patients and families dealing with terminal illness, as well as the Palliative Care Program for those living with chronic illness. Info session is on Thursday, **February 21, 1:00-3:00pm**, at 677 E. 12<sup>th</sup> Ave (Eugene). Training will be the last week of April and first 2 weeks of May (2019). To register for the info meeting—no obligation! - please call Victoria at 458-205-7443, or email to: [vspeak@peacehealth.org](mailto:vspeak@peacehealth.org).

### FAITH SERIES: CATECHISM THROUGH THE YEAR

#### HOW CAN A LOVING GOD SEND PEOPLE TO HELL?

Jesus' teaching about Hell—that is, the state of eternal separation from God—includes a quote from Isaiah: "There the worm will not die, and fire will not be extinguished." (Is 66:24; Mk 9:48) The prophet was describing the immense garbage dump in a valley called Gehenna outside Jerusalem, where worm infested refuse was heaped on a fire continually burning.

No wonder, then, that in Jewish culture this hellish place gave it's name to the fate of the damned. Its ceaseless flames symbolized the horrors of sin and its consequences, and the inner torment of those who remain in sin.

Our contemporaries often dismiss the idea of Hell as a myth tied to belief in a cruel and vengeful God. They may even attempt to contrast the doctrine of Hell with the teaching of Jesus, insisting that He spoke only of the Father's love and mercy. Yet Jesus actually spoke more often about Hell in the Gospel accounts than He did about Heaven. Though He insisted that God loves the world and desires that no one perish eternally, He also insisted that we stand in danger of damnation if we reject God's offer of reconciliation. (see Jn 3:16-18)

To deny the possibility of Hell is to deny the reality of human free will. God has created us as persons who can choose to return His love. But love that is coerced is not love at all. If we have free will, we must have the capability of rejecting God, both now and forever. And if we reject Him, we are in fact choosing Hell, the state of eternal separation from Him.

Our loving Father wills that all be saved (see 1 Tm 2:4; 2 Pt 3:9). But He respects the free will He has given us. "I have set before you life and death," He says, "the blessing and the curse. Choose life." (Dt 30:19)

**RECOMMENDED READING:** Excerpt taken from The NEW Catholic Answer Bible  
Mt 17:24-27 · Mk 16:7 · Lk 22:32 · Jn 21:15-17 · Acts 2:14-36; 3:1-26; 5:1-11; 15:7-11 · 1 Pt 5:1 ·  
& Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC) Nos. 440-443 · 552-556 · 737 · 765 · 768 · 771 ·  
815-816 · 834 · 862 · 874-887 · 891 · 914 · 936-937 · 981 · 1444 · 2034-2035 ·