

## NT-JN41A

### 11.25.18

From a Homily on St. John's Gospel by St. Augustine <sup>1</sup>

Listen, everyone, Jews and Gentiles, circumcised and uncircumcised. Listen, all kings of the earth. I am no hindrance to your rule in this world, for *my kingdom is not of this world*. Banish the groundless fear that filled Herod the Great on hearing that Christ was born. More cruel in his fear than in his anger, he put many children to death, so that Christ also would die. But *my kingdom is not of this world*, says Christ. What further reassurance do you seek? Come to the kingdom not of this world. Be not enraged by fear, but come by faith. In a prophecy Christ also said: *He*, that is, God the Father, *has made me king on Zion his holy mountain*. But that Zion and that mountain are not of this world.

What in fact is Christ's kingdom? It is simply those who believe in him, those to whom he has said: *You are not of this world, even as I am not of this world*. He willed, nevertheless, that they should be in the world, which is why he prayed to the Father: *I ask you not to take them out of the world, but to protect them from the evil one*. So here also he did not say: *My kingdom is not in this world, but is not of this world*. And when he went on to prove this by declaring: *If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would have fought to save me from being handed over to the Jews*, he concluded by saying not "my kingdom is not here," but *my kingdom is not from here*.

Indeed, his kingdom is here until the end of time, and until the harvest it will contain weeds. The harvest is the end of the world, when the reapers, who are angels, will come *and gather out of his kingdom all causes of sin* : and this could not happen if his kingdom were not here. But even so, it is not from here, for it is in exile in the world. Christ says to his kingdom: *You are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world*. They were indeed of the world when they belonged to the prince of this world, before they became his kingdom. Though created by the true God, everyone born of the corrupt and accursed stock of Adam is of this world. On the other hand, everyone who is reborn in Christ becomes the kingdom which is no longer of the world. For so has God snatched us from the powers of darkness, and brought us into the kingdom of his beloved Son: that kingdom of which he said: *My kingdom is not of this world; my kingly power does not come from here*.

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<sup>1</sup> Christ Our Light: Readings on Gospel Themes – vol. II – Exordium Books – 1985 pg. 256

## **OT-JER31**

### **11.26.18**

The Prophecies of Jeremiah – from a book by A. Feuillet <sup>2</sup>

Jeremiah like some of the authors of the psalms who were to follow him, has left us insights into his most personal thoughts, prayers, and almost a dialogue between himself and God. In this regard he imitates the psalms of lamentation. The personal character of his work makes him seem a literary creator. He writes of the sufferings he experienced in his mission. The misinterpretation of his threatening sermons, the failure of his ministry, official and less open persecution, sickness, moral isolation, all were occasions of suffering, and he mentions them by turns. He was temperamentally disposed to feel these things deeply. In his writings he appears as a sensitive man who never desired evil for his people. Though he was quite timid, fierce words continually burst forth from his mouth. He was easily discouraged. Several times he is seized by a paroxysm of sorrow: in ch. 12, where he poses for the first time in the Bible the problem of the relation between God's government of the world and the conduct of individuals; in ch. 15, when in the midst of Jeremiah's career Yahweh calls him a second time and invites him to moral effort and spiritual progress. The suffering of the prophet made him more open to God.

Jeremiah speaks of a Palestinian restoration with Jerusalem as the religious center and a descendant of David upon the throne. The ancient alliance which has ended in failure will be replaced by a new one. In the future God will act directly on the hearts of men. He will give them new hearts. The law will no longer be engraven on tables of stone, but in the hearts of men. God Himself will teach all His law. Yahweh will be known to all. Though religion will still remain something national, it will be very much personalized. The disappearance of the ark anticipates the words of Jesus about the true adorers of the Father. No one has expressed better than Jeremiah the idea that religion is an interior union between God and the individual. God freely makes this union possible; mortals must use the opportunity given. In short, God first caused Jeremiah, his prophet, to intensely live what was going to become God's essential message in view of the future.

The principal glory of Jeremiah is to have given Old Testament thought a decisive push in the direction of the New Testament and to have foreshadowed much that is distinctively Christian

St. Augustine has clearly indicated this New Testament turn of Jeremiah's thought: The difference between the Old and New Covenants is easily seen. In the former the law is written on tables of stone; in the latter it is written in the hearts of men. The one concerns externals and inspires fear; the other concerns the heart and fills it with joy. God causes us to grow interiorly and through the Holy Spirit who has been given us puts love in our hearts."

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<sup>2</sup> Introduction to the Old Testament – A. Robert & A. Feuillet –  
Desclee Co. – N.Y. 1968 – pg 313

**OT-JER32**  
**11.27.18**

**Meditations on the Prophet Jeremiah by Cardinal Carlo Martini <sup>3</sup>**

There are some beautiful oracles of Jeremiah on the purification of the heart. We will choose some of the more poetic passages to help us penetrate into the mystery of the purification of the heart. The first situation is that of the abandonment of God (“*they have forsaken me*”). God is no longer considered as the One who is Lord of all of life. After the incredulity, idolatry is unmasked (“*they have profaned this place by making offerings in it to other gods*”) Here we see an identification with sin, which consists precisely in not recognizing God as lord of life and history, in adoring idols, and in becoming inhuman towards one’s neighbors.

There are three attitudes constituting the destructive and negative actions. First, the incredulity, not only theoretic-atheism, but also practical. It happens when I do not recognize the power of God in my daily life, even if perhaps I repeat with my lips “Lord, Lord”. God must be recognized as Lord of my actions, of my daily morals. Second, Idolatry is not necessarily the adoration of idols. According to the doctrine later specified in the New Testament, it is the adoration of success, of pleasure, of power at any cost. Large modern cities are moved by such “gods”. It is an attitude that mirrors the abandonment of God. To refuse God as Lord is at the same time recognizing political power, worldly power, and wealth as lords of one’s life. Third, Connected with the previous two is inhumanity, not being moved by the sufferings of another, using another, oppressing or despising the poor.

I would like you to notice that of these three sins, the most striking, the one that is horribly repellent, is inhumanity. Let us observe how people are indignant in front of violence, oppression, injustice. Even a secular culture sees the most obvious face of sin in inhumanity. Nevertheless, the secular city often doesn’t realize that the contempt for one’s neighbor, the hatred of another, often has the root in idolatry, namely the idolatry of self, of one’s personal project, the adoration, of money and of success. Inhumanity is only the third reason for the degradation, and here the message of Jeremiah’s prophecy turns up appropriately. If we do not understand that the race to autonomy, to unbridled pleasure, to drugs, to wealth, to career, to power is evil, if we do not grasp how from all this a dreadful humanity unfolds, it will be impossible to put an end to oppression and to the suffering of others.

Jeremiah’s prophecy is very important because it goes to the root of evil and presents an extremely lucid analysis of what causes the disorder and decadence of nations. It also recalls three attitudes that produce irreparable situations destined to self-destruct.

What is the opposite of the perverse trio (faithlessness, idolatry and inhumanity)? The answer is easy: the Beatitudes, which represent the presence of God the king, the just evaluation of moral goods, the triumph of humanity..

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<sup>3</sup> A Prophetic Voice in the City: Meditations on the Prophet Jeremiah – Cardinal Carlo Maria Martini – The Liturgical Press – Collegeville, MN – 1997 – [p 5 f

## OT-JER33

11.28.18

### Meditations on the Prophet Jeremiah by Cardinal Carlo Martini <sup>4</sup>

The prophecy of Jeremiah shows us the covenant as the mutual adherence of the people to God and of God to the people. The will of God is the covenant. This is the synthesis of all the history of mankind as God sees it. In other words, God creates men and women for a covenant. We can say that the history of humankind should be the external projection of the intimate story of God. God lives in himself in a mysterious, inexpressible and most [rpfund] covenant whereby the Father is everything for the Son, the Son is everything for the Father, and this, in the Spirit, is the glory, the fullness of God. God wishes to spread forth the project that is himself; hence God constitutes on the Son a people to whom he can say: "You are mine, and I am yours." The covenant is the very Trinity projected into history. It is almost a physical form of the covenant: to be one body, to adhere almost physically to the Lord. This is the force of God's plan.

God communicates his name mysteriously, so that the people who bear his name identify with him, are his renown, his pride. And he concedes his own glory to his people, he communicates it to them. The glory of God is his people, humanity.

The bitterness and disappointment with which the Lord says in Jeremiah: "*But they did not listen to me*" is understandable. God is saddened by sin because humankind has not believed in his promise for happiness, has not corresponded to his covenant, his plan. It is difficult for us to understand that we are God's "wealth", that he has tied himself to us to the point that our success is also his, our failure is also his, our lack of communication is his disappointment, our laziness his sadness.

If then God is touched by humanity's response and by the city's negative answer, we can ask ourselves: Why is it a matter of a *new* covenant? Because God does not stay disappointed forever, does not accept his treasure being lost, hence he makes a new covenant. Jeremiah, who witnesses the loss of God's plan and God's deep bitterness for the city of Jerusalem, is the one who foresees the coming of a new covenant, the alliance which will be fully realized in Jesus. Jesus takes upon himself the consequences of God's disappointment and frustration on his plan in order to give us back to the Father.

God really loves our cities, he loves the city made up by humanity. He wants it to be his, as a part of himself, Jesus suffers and dies to take on all the evils, the contradictions, the wickedness of the city. And we too, as his people, must take upon us the contradictions, the poverty, the misery, the marginalization, the cries and the pains of humanity. Now we have a glimpse of understanding for a pastoral and apostolic vocation that mysteriously takes part in the atoning and redemptive action of the Son of God.

But the story of the city and of humanity is also my personal story. So every response on my part that is weak, lukewarm, deaf or negligent, represents a failure for him. From this we can gain a real sense of what our sins, our lack of response, truly are: they prevent the divine design to reach his planned result of glory; they keep God from manifesting in me the fullness of his love.

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<sup>4</sup> A Prophetic Voice in the City: Meditations on the Prophet Jeremiah – Cardinal Carlo Martini = The Liturgical Press – Collegeville, MN – 1997 – pg 35f

## OT-JER34

11.29.18

Meditations on the Prophet Jeremiah by Cardinal Carlo Martini <sup>5</sup>

### *How is one to pray for the city in the spirit of Jeremiah*

The authors of the New Testament and the Fathers of the Church help us to reflect on ourselves and on the way we become involved in the paths of those persons whom the Lord places in our way.

At times, when praying in the evening, I think painfully of the many sins committed at night in a large city: episodes of violence, drugs, prostitution, crimes, thefts, adultery, betrayals, and both social and political swindles. Faced with such continuous and numerous sins in the city, we could be tempted to bring very severe judgments, haughty reproaches, merciless criticisms, as if following the tendencies of the press and public opinion. But our feeling of being mildly superior is malicious and makes us victims of that type of self-justification that the apostle Paul so harshly criticized.

Jeremiah, Jesus, and the saints never had such an attitude contrary to the gospel principles: they have instead cried for the suffering and the sins of the city as if they were their own. Pastoral love shows itself through hatred of evil. This form of charity makes us all feel such a deep empathy for the person doing the evil that we are in pain for him. We stay close to his side, invoking the miracle of God, in the hope that Christ Jesus has already conquered all the evils of humanity.

When I think of the sins of the city, which touch me directly as pastor because they are all infidelities to the gospel, after having felt almost physically upon me the weight of these faults, errors, ignorance destructive of the human being, I then feel serene in the light of this certitude. I tell myself, in fact, that a drop of Jesus' blood washes away every horrible thing, every crime, every form of violence because everything has already been carried on the cross, is already forgiven. He calls his children home, the women and men of every era and every nation, he calls them to return from exile, to live anew, and Jeremiah's positive oracle flows over them. The Lord does not fear any type of separation and gives life to all of humanity.

We then return to our ministry comforted by the mercy of the heart of Christ, by the contemplation of the crucifix that cries out: "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing", knowing that forgiveness is first of all for us, for each of us, that it involves everyone, and takes us into the embrace of the risen one.

The Lord wants to inspire in us who are part of a confused and suffering city the attitude of one who has a deep sense of sin, of fault, of lack of knowledge of God, of the injustices being plotted in the world, but at the same time has the expression of Jesus, a glance full of hope and mercy. Let us pray for each other, in the desire that this be truly the daily expression of our Christian love, so as to remain confident and at peace even in a corrupt, complex, and confused society such as ours.

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<sup>5</sup> A Prophetic Voice in the City: Meditations on the Prophet Jeremiah – Cardinal Carlo Martini 0 The Liturgical Press – Collegeville, MN – 1997 – pg. 148

**11SN3001**

**11.30.2018**

**TAKING UP HIS CROSS AND FOLLOWING CHRIST, from a Sermon by St Bernard<sup>6</sup>**

Today we celebrate the festival of St Andrew, and if we ponder it lovingly we shall find much for the building up of our souls...

You will surely have noticed how St Andrew, when he reached the place where the cross was prepared, was strengthened in the Lord, and began to utter those burning words, through the Spirit whom he had received in tongues of fire, along with the other apostles... His mouth spoke from the abundance of his heart, and that love which burned in his heart flashed forth as bright flame in his voice. And what did blessed Andrew say, when as I said, he saw in the distance the cross which had been prepared for him? 'O cross,' he said, 'so long desired and now made ready for my eager spirit! With joy and confidence I come to you, therefore do you too receive me gladly, as the disciple of him who hanged on you; for I have always been your lover and have longed to embrace you'...

From where come such hitherto unknown joy and exultation? Whence such constancy in fragility? Whence, in a mere human, such spiritual ardor, such burning love, such vigor of soul? Far be it from us to imagine that it comes from his own strength. It is a perfect gift coming down from the Father of lights, for he alone does great wonders.(Ja 1:17) It was indeed the Spirit, beloved brethren, who came to the aid of his weakness, through whom that love strong as death was poured into our hearts, indeed it is stronger than death. May God give us a share in it!... If we grow weary and sleep at vigils, it is only because of our feeble spirit. If the Holy Spirit is present, doubtless he helps our infirmity; what he did for St Andrew on the cross and in his death, he will also do for us in our toil and penance: not only will he make these seem no longer burdensome, he will even make them a desire and a delight. 'My Spirit', says the Lord, 'is sweeter than honey', so that the bitterness of death, no matter how bitter, would not be able to lessen its sweetness...

Let us seek this Spirit, my brethren, let us do our utmost to gain him, or to possess him more fully if he is not already in us. Because 'anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him'(Rom 8:9). 'We have not received the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is from God, that we might understand the gifts bestowed on us by God'.(1Cor 2:12)

We must take up our cross with St Andrew, or rather, with him whom St Andrew followed, the Lord our Savior. The cause of his joy and exultation was that he was dying not only for his Lord but also with him, in like manner, that suffering with him he might reign with him. And we too, if we are to be crucified with him, let us listen with the ears

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<sup>6</sup>Deuxieme sermon pour la fete de St Andre, 1, 3-5, 7: PL 183, 509-512.

of our heart to his voice saying: 'If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me'... (Mt 16:24) For in the cross is our salvation, provided we cleave to it firmly. 'The word of the cross,' says the Apostle, 'is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God'. (1Cor 1:18)

**In her hiddenness we find Mary's greatness; from a book by Thomas Merton.** <sup>7</sup>

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In all the great mystery of Mary, then, one thing remains most clear: that of herself she is nothing, and that God has for our sakes delighted to manifest his glory and his love in her.

It is because she is, of all the saints, the most perfectly poor and the most perfectly hidden, the one who has absolutely nothing whatever that she attempts to possess as her own, that she can most fully communicate to the rest of us the grace of the infinitely selfless God. And we will most truly possess him when we have emptied ourselves and become poor and hidden as she is, resembling him by resembling her.

And all our sanctity depends on her maternal love. The ones she desires to share the joy of her own poverty and simplicity, the ones whom she wills to be hidden as she is hidden, are the ones who share her closeness to God.

It is a tremendous grace, then, and a great privilege when a person living in the world we have to live in, suddenly loses his interest in the things that absorb that world and discovers in his own soul an appetite for poverty and solitude. And the most precious of all the gifts of nature or grace is the desire to be hidden and to vanish from human sight and be accounted as nothing by the world and to disappear from one's own self-conscious consideration and vanish into nothingness in the immense poverty that is the adoration of God.

This absolute emptiness, this poverty, this obscurity holds within it the secret of all joy because it is full of God. To seek this emptiness is true devotion to the Mother of God. To find it is to find her. And to be hidden in its depths is to be full of God as she is full of him, and to share her mission of bringing him to all peoples.

Yet all generations must call her blessed, because they all receive through her obedience whatever supernatural life and joy is granted to them. And it is necessary that the world should acknowledge her and that the praise of God's great work in her should be sung in poetry and that cathedrals should be built in her name. For unless Our Lady is recognized as the Mother of God and as the Queen of all the saints and angels and as the hope of the world, faith in God will remain

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<sup>7</sup> *New Seeds of Contemplation*, New Directions, 1961, pp. 173-75.



incomplete. How can we ask him for all the things he would have us hope for if we do not know, by contemplating the sanctity of the Immaculate Virgin, what great things he has power to accomplish in us.

