

FIRST READING: Jeremiah 30:1-2, 12-15, 18-22

A reading from the Book of the Prophet Jeremiah:

The following message came to Jeremiah from the LORD: For thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: Write all the words I have spoken to you in a book. For thus says the LORD: Incurable is your wound, grievous your bruise; There is none to plead your cause, no remedy for your running sore, no healing for you. All your lovers have forgotten you, they do not seek you. I struck you as an enemy would strike, punished you cruelly; Why cry out over your wound? your pain is without relief. Because of your great guilt, your numerous sins, I have done this to you. Thus says the LORD: See! I will restore the tents of Jacob, his dwellings I will pity; City shall be rebuilt upon hill, and palace restored as it was. From them will resound songs of praise, the laughter of happy men. I will make them not few, but many; they will not be tiny, for I will glorify them. His sons shall be as of old, his assembly before me shall stand firm; I will punish all his oppressors. His leader shall be one of his own, and his rulers shall come from his kin. When I summon him, he shall approach me; how else should one take the deadly risk of approaching me? says the LORD. You shall be my people, and I will be your God.

The word of the Lord.

RESPONSORIAL: Psalm 102:16-18, 19-21, 29 and 22-23

***The Lord will build up Zion again, and appear in all his glory.***

The nations shall revere your name, O LORD, and all the kings of the earth your glory, When the LORD has rebuilt Zion and appeared in his glory; When he has regarded the prayer of the destitute, and not despised their prayer.

***The Lord will build up Zion again, and appear in all his glory.***

Let this be written for the generation to come,  
and let his future creatures praise the LORD:  
“The LORD looked down from his holy height,  
from heaven he beheld the earth,  
To hear the groaning of the prisoners,  
to release those doomed to die.”

***The Lord will build up Zion again, and appear in all his glory.***

The children of your servants shall abide, and their posterity shall continue in your presence, That the name of the LORD may be declared on Zion; and his praise, in Jerusalem, When the peoples gather together and the kingdoms, to serve the LORD.

***The Lord will build up Zion again, and appear in all his glory.***

Gospel: Matthew 14:22-36

+ A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew:

Jesus made the disciples get into a boat and precede him to the other side of the sea, while he dismissed the crowds. After doing so, he went up on the mountain by himself to pray. When it was evening he was there alone. Meanwhile the boat, already a few miles offshore, was being tossed about by the waves, for the wind was against it. During the fourth watch of the night, he came toward them, walking on the sea. When the disciples saw him walking on the sea they

were terrified. "It is a ghost," they said, and they cried out in fear. At once Jesus spoke to them, "Take courage, it is I; do not be afraid." Peter said to him in reply, "Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water." He said, "Come." Peter got out of the boat and began to walk on the water toward Jesus. But when he saw how strong the wind was he became frightened; and, beginning to sink, he cried out, "Lord, save me!" Immediately Jesus stretched out his hand and caught him, and said to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?" After they got into the boat, the wind died down. Those who were in the boat did him homage, saying, "Truly, you are the Son of God." After making the crossing, they came to land at Gennesaret. When the men of that place recognized him, they sent word to all the surrounding country. People brought to him all those who were sick and begged him that they might touch only the tassel on his cloak, and as many as touched it were healed.

The Gospel of the Lord.

**OR IN YEAR A:** Matthew 15:1-2, 10-14

+ A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew:

Some Pharisees and scribes came to Jesus from Jerusalem and said, "Why do your disciples break the tradition of the elders? They do not wash their hands when they eat a meal." He summoned the crowd and said to them, "Hear and understand. It is not what enters one's mouth that defiles the man; but what comes out of the mouth is what defiles one." Then his disciples approached and said to him, "Do you know that the Pharisees took offense when they heard what you said?" He said in reply, "Every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted. Let them alone; they are blind guides of the blind. If a blind man leads a blind man, both will fall into a pit."

The Gospel of the Lord.

### **Reflection for the 18<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of the Year**

Incurable wounds, being alone while troubled and deep in sin have begun our day in scripture. Why does this sound like such bad news? Because it is. Without God people are without healing, compassion and forgiveness. But is this our true state in life? Sometimes it can feel like it. We, however, are people of faith. Our hope is in the Lord. Jesus has promised us that he is with us always until the end of time. God is our God and we are God's people. Nothing, not even sin and death can separate us from the love of Christ.

God is love; infinite, eternal and unconditional. This is the reality of our lives in faith even when we feel otherwise. God is just a thought away. Jesus is closer to us than our beating hearts. In all our troubles, trials and pain, Jesus never leaves our side. This makes our bad news into good news. I can listen to the news, in all its horror and know the nearness of God. I can face all my hurts and sin while knowing the faithfulness of Jesus' love. Jeremiah has contrasted our human experience with the experience of God's love. God's love prevails despite the evil we can face. Through our faith, God molds us into the people that God wants us to be.

Peter made a mistake in today's gospel. He mistook the glory of Jesus to be his own. Being human, I can make the same mistake. I can forget that only in God will my soul be at rest. Healing and forgiveness are the gifts that Jesus offered to Peter when his hubris led him to believe that he could walk on water just like Jesus. Jesus saved Peter like Jesus saves you and

me. In any good that I am able to do, any sense that I can make when I preach and any service I can perform for God's people, it is Jesus who works within and through me. I fail, like Peter when I forget this truth, "Jesus is Lord!"

I am certain that on the night Peter almost drowned, he remembered how Jesus saved his life. He had a come to Jesus moment and Jesus came to him and saved him from drowning in the deep. I have had those moments. The hand of Jesus has helped me through the hands others have offered to drag me from the depths of loss and pain. They may have been the hands of those who have loved me and in them Jesus was there saving me. Have you known, too, saving helping hands of others that have saved you? In them Jesus has worked.

May we always know the nearness of Jesus when we need him.

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