

12th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Cycle A
Jeremiah 20:10-13
Psalm 69:8-10, 14, 17, 33-35
Romans 5:12-15
John 15:26B, 27A
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Jesus' remark in our gospel that "Nothing is concealed that will not be revealed, and nothing hidden that will not be known," has often been interpreted as a warning that our most secret sins will one day be proclaimed for all to hear. Understood in this way, Jesus' words seem to have been fulfilled in our time. Certainly things are spoken about in public today, that wouldn't even have been hinted at years ago. In this country, nothing seems to be too private or too embarrassing to be splashed across social media. No subject is too painful, intimate or salacious to be shared with the world.

Nowadays, however, Jesus' words in our Gospel are usually interpreted differently. Our Lord seems to be telling the apostles that what he has taught them in private must now be proclaimed from the housetops. It is the good news of Christ that should be revealed in the light. Jesus' words are not so much a warning about our secret sins, as they are a pep talk, urging us to share our faith with the world.

So it's ironic that the one thing that Jesus tells us we must speak about, is just about the only subject that is still regarded as intensely private. Public testimony about our religious belief is the last taboo. But whatever the fashion may be, there is no getting around our Christian obligation to tell others about what Christ has done for us.

This does not mean that we have to ring the doorbells of strangers

and ask them if they have accepted Jesus Christ as their personal savior. There are other ways to offer testimony to Christ. Just by gathering together in worship we make a good beginning, but we must do more. We have to look for opportunities in our day-to-day lives to reveal our faith to the people God sends our way. For example, when we encounter someone who is suffering, we can offer to pray for them, or even, if we dare, offer to pray *with* them. When we find ourselves involved in a conversation that is becoming ugly or destructive, we can object, or at least walk away. At an appropriate moment we can reveal to a friend or colleague what Christ means to us. About the only thing we risk in doing these things is embarrassment. Though, admittedly, it sometimes seems preferable to be thrown to the lions or roasted over a slow fire than to be made to look foolish. A major theme of our readings today is that if we embrace the Word and preach it, we will suffer for it. Most of us are unlikely to suffer very much from this particular cause. But if we are courageous, then when we stand before the Risen Lord to be judged, and he asks us what we have suffered for his name, we will at least be able to say, "Well, there *was* that time back in the summer of 20__ when I risked being embarrassed for you."