

## Twentieth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C, Catechist - RCLB Lectionary



### Catechist Background and Preparation

To prepare for this session read all the readings.

Jeremiah 38:4-6, 8-10

Psalm 40:2, 3, 4, 18

Hebrews 12:1-4

Luke 12:49-53

Spend a few minutes reflecting on what these readings mean for you today. Was there a particular reading which appealed to you? Was there a word or image that engaged you?

Read the Word in Liturgy and Catholic Doctrine sections. These give you background on what you will be doing this session. Read over the session outline and make it your own. Check to see what materials you will need for this session.

## The Word In Liturgy

The prophet Jeremiah's mission to preach repentance to the Israelites often brought him into direct conflict with the powerful elite of his day. At a time when Judah was a subject state of the much more powerful Babylon, the weak King Zedekiah was convinced by various leaders of the people to form an alliance with Babylon's enemies and offer armed resistance. Jeremiah strenuously objected and predicted doom if the King did not change his plans. The prophet insisted that instead of revolt, repentance of their sinful ways was the only way out of their difficulties. Seeing how his preaching was demoralizing the army, the princes accused Jeremiah of treason and convinced the King to give him over into their hands. Today's reading describes his fate: First, he was lowered into a cistern and left to die. And then, at the hand of a foreigner who interceded on his behalf with the King, Jeremiah was finally rescued.

In the Gospel, Luke continues his travel narrative, in which he has Jesus instructing his followers on what they should expect (and what is expected of them) as his disciples. In today's reading Jesus uses the images of fire and baptism to express the ultimate struggle that he knows awaits him in Jerusalem. Fire was a symbol of purification (Luke 3:16-17) as well as of judgment (Revelation 20:10). Luke describes the descent of the Spirit at Pentecost as appearing like tongues of fire upon the disciples. Clearly, it is not only Jesus who will have to face the refining fires of the end time. His disciples, too, will be "immersed" (i.e., "baptized") in the bath of suffering, just as was Jesus. To illustrate this, and perhaps to recognize the reality already being lived by those in his community, Luke further describes—

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the kind of opposition and division that is inevitable for those who cast their lot with Jesus, — the messiah bound for suffering and death in Jerusalem.

# **Catholic Doctrine**

## ***The Conflict Between Good and Evil—The Two Ways***

The Catholic theology of creation has three basic points. The first is that we have affirmed from the earliest times that God created ex nihilo or, “out of nothing.” This means that there was not some sort of pre-existent material, but that everything in creation owes its existence to God. Even though there is evil in the world, someday God will overcome it. The second point is that God created the world good. This is a refrain echoed in the Genesis account (1:1-2:4) and that therefore evil is not the result of God. Through our human freedom, somehow evil entered the world after God created it. The third point is that since creation is the handiwork of God, we humans can come to know God through it by the efforts of our reason (although the fullness of revelation is found in Jesus Christ).

Thus, Scripture and Catholic theology attests that good and evil are not equal principles, with equal force. God is more powerful than evil. We know that in Christ, God triumphs over evil. And yet, evil does exist.

The way of Christ is the path believers take which leads to life. A contrary way leads to death and destruction. (CCC 1696)

The point of reference for every Christian who promotes and seeks the culture of life is Jesus Christ who himself is “the way, the truth and the life” (John 14:16). By loving Christ every Christian draws closer to the Lord and is able to pursue the good work which God has begun in us. (CCC 1698)