

June 21, 2026
12th Sunday in Ordinary Time
Matthew 10:26-33

Jesus said to the Twelve: “Fear no one. Nothing is concealed that will not be revealed, nor secret that will not be known. What I say to you in the darkness, speak in the light; what you hear whispered, proclaim on the housetops.

And do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather, be afraid of the one who can destroy both soul and body in Gehenna. Are not two sparrows sold for a small coin? Yet not one of them falls to the ground without your Father's knowledge. Even all the hairs of your head are counted. So do not be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows. Everyone who acknowledges me before others I will acknowledge before my heavenly Father. But whoever denies me before others, I will deny before my heavenly Father.

Background:

The Gospel text from last Sunday (Matthew 9:36-10:8) described how Jesus was moved at the sight of the crowds who were abandoned like sheep without a shepherd. Then he called his disciples and commissioned twelve of them to be apostles, and he began preparing to send them out with authority to proclaim the kingdom of God to the lost sheep of Israel. This took us into part of the second of five major discourses within Matthew's Gospel. This discourse deals with the mission of Jesus and the disciples. (Matt 10:1-42) The first eight verses of this first discourse, dealing with the naming and preparing to send out of the twelve, were part of our Gospel last Sunday.

If time permits, it would be beneficial to read the first twenty-five verses of the tenth chapter of Matthew's Gospel, in preparation for your reflection on the Gospel for this Sunday. To summarize, Matthew continues in that discourse with Jesus instructing the apostles as to how they are to travel. While acknowledging the danger involved in being sent to the towns and villages, he asks them to rely on the Jewish code of hospitality for strangers. Therefore, they are not to take money or provisions for themselves, and they are to stay at only one person's house for the duration of their visit in any particular town. (Matt 10:9-15) Also they need to be prepared for rejection and persecution. Jesus assures them that even if others reject them, God will still be with them. He concludes by saying that a slave is not greater than the master. This may imply that if He, their master, has been sent out by His Father to be with them and he faced rejection and harsh treatment, they should expect the same mission and possible mistreatment. (Matt 10:16-25)

The Gospel for this Sunday then continues with Jesus' further instruction to the apostles, where he tells them not to be afraid. The direct exhortation to “fear no one” may suggest that, for the faith-filled disciple, fear should be nonexistent. However, Jesus seems to acknowledge the fear the disciples may experience as they face the difficulties they will encounter. Jesus does not suggest that they should not be afraid of anything. Rather, he tells them they should only be afraid of the one who has the ability to bring upon them much greater pain: the physical, eternal pain of life without God. That would be worse than any physical suffering they might have to endure on their mission.

Jesus then uses two images to reassure the disciples of God's intimate concern for each of them. God is mindful of each of the numerous sparrows in the world, and even the countless hairs on humans' heads. This is a reminder to the disciples that even though they may feel that they have been abandoned or forgotten by God in difficult times, this is not so. God is acutely aware of each of them, and the hairs of one's head are beyond being counted, yet God knows each of these. Therefore, it would be a serious mistake to give in to one's doubts and turn from God.

Reflection Questions:

1. What have been some of the fears you have experienced, now or in the past?
2. What effect has fear had on you and how you live your life?

3. Can you recall places in the Scriptures where God responds to the fears of the people, or those he has chosen to be his servants?
4. Can you imagine that God knows every hair on your head? How do you feel about God who knows you so well?
5. Are there other images from the bible or other places that speak to you of God's closeness to you?
6. What has your relationship with God taught you about God in whispers, that you would like to proclaim from the housetops?
7. Are you familiar with Psalms that speak of fear?
8. What is it that is so important to God, that God would ask you to face the possibility of your deepest fears?
9. Can you take some time now to talk with God about your fears, or how you hear God asking you to address those fears?

The Gospel background and reflection questions are prepared and distributed by Sister Anne Marie Lom, OSF and Joe Thiel, as edited from Reflections authored by Fr. Paul Gallagher, OFM. The excerpts from the Sunday readings are prepared by Joe Thiel. To be added to the distribution list, send your name and email address to annemarie.lom@gmail.com

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Excerpts from the Readings for June 21, 2026, the Twelfth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Jeremiah said: "I hear the whisperings of many: 'Terror on every side! Let us denounce him!' All those who were my friends are on the watch for any misstep of mine. 'Perhaps he will be trapped; then we can prevail, and take our vengeance on him.' But the Lord is with me, like a mighty champion: my persecutors will stumble, they will not triumph. In their failure they will be put to utter shame, to lasting, unforgettable confusion. O Lord of hosts, you who test the just, who probe mind and heart, let me witness the vengeance you take on them, for to you I have entrusted my cause. Sing to the Lord, praise the Lord, for he has rescued the life of the poor from the power of the wicked!"

Lord, in your great love, answer me.
 For your sake I bear insult, and shame covers my face.
 I have become an outcast to my brothers, a stranger to my children,
 Because zeal for your house consumes me, and the insults of those who blaspheme you fall upon me.
 I pray to you, O Lord, for the time of your favor!
 In your great kindness answer me with your help; in your great mercy turn toward me.
 "See, you lowly ones, and be glad; you who seek God, may your hearts revive!"

For the Lord hears the poor, and his own who are in bonds he spurns not.
Let the heavens and the earth praise him, the seas and whatever moves in them!"

Brothers and sisters: Through one man sin entered the world, and through sin, death,
and thus death came to all men, inasmuch as all sinned.
Death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who did not sin
after the pattern of Adam, who is the type of the one who was to come.
But the gift is not like the transgression.
For if by the transgression of the one the many died,
how much more did the gracious gift of the one man Jesus Christ overflow for the many.

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Excerpts from Jeremiah 20:10-13; Psalm 69:8-10, 14, 17, 33-35; Romans 5:12-15; Matthew 10:26-33