

July 21st

Saint JEREMIAH the prophet

Memorial

Jeremiah was born of a priestly family in the village of Anathoth, northeast of Jerusalem, around 650 BC. He appeared at the most critical time in the history of Israel, in the years before the destruction of Jerusalem and the deportation to Babylon (586). For nearly forty years, he was to be the witness of God in the midst of the people whose anguish and destiny he shared. He was to discover in the very heart of this drama the demands of faith as he prepared for the future.

Even though evil invaded the world and even though the prophet foresaw the approaching catastrophe, Jeremiah knew that God's love persists and calls his people to conversion. He claimed that reconciliation would come after their testing, a new coming-together, a "new covenant" which would transform the heart of man.

Already in the first century BC, the memory of the Prophet Jeremiah seems to have been an object of special veneration in the Jewish world. Christians continued to venerate him, impressed by the similarity of his life with that of Christ, of whom he is one of the clearest figures. The Fathers often hailed him as a martyr, and we know that in the fourth century, his memory was celebrated in Egypt and Palestine.

The liturgy of this day is primarily a call to conversion: God is alive and near: his love can turn a life around; his word is addressed to the heart of man. "I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore I have continued my faithfulness to you" (Jer 31: 3).

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON: Jer 23: 3a. 4a

I myself will gather the remnant of my flock from all the lands. I will appoint shepherds for them who will shepherd them.

COLLECT

O God, who called your people to penance through the mouth of the Prophet Jeremiah, pardon all our faults and in your mercy, turn aside from us the punishment we have deserved.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

FIRST READING

A reading from the book of the prophet Jeremiah Jer 1: 4-10

The word of the LORD came to me thus: Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I dedicated you, a prophet to the nations I appointed you. "Ah, Lord GOD!" I said, "I know not how to speak; I am too young." But the LORD answered me, "Say not, 'I am too young.' To whomever I send you, you shall go; whatever I command you, you shall speak. Have no fear before them, because I am with you to deliver you, says the LORD." Then the LORD extended his hand and touched my mouth, saying, "See, I place my words in your mouth! This day I set you over nations and over kingdoms, To root up and to tear down, to destroy and to demolish, to build and to plant."

The Word of the Lord.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM Jer 17: 7.8 (R. Luke 11: 28)

R. Blessed are they who hear the word of God and keep it.

Or else: R. Jer 31: 3

R. With age-old love I have loved you.

1. Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD,
whose hope is the LORD.

He is like a tree planted beside the waters
that stretches out its roots to the stream: R.

2. It fears not the heat when it comes,
its leaves stay green;
In the year of drought it shows no distress,
but still bears fruit. R.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION Jer 1: 5

R. Alleluia. Alleluia.

Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I dedicated you, a prophet to the
nations I appointed you.

R. Alleluia.

GOSPEL

A reading of the holy gospel according to Matthew 23: 37-39

At that time Jesus said to the Pharisees: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone
those sent to you, how many times I yearned to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her
young under her wings, but you were unwilling! Behold, your house will be abandoned, desolate. I tell
you, you will not see me again until you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.'"
The Gospel of the Lord.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Almighty and merciful God, through the prayers of the holy Prophet Jeremiah, grant that this sacrifice
of salvation may preserve your faithful forever free from all sins, and protect them from all adversity.
Through Christ our Lord.

PREFACE

Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts...

COMMUNION ANTIPHON Jer 31: 3

With age-old love I have loved you; so I have kept my mercy toward you.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

O God, through the bread of life you have freed your faithful from the bonds of sin. In your mercy,
draw firmly to yourself the hearts of those whom you have loved with an eternal love, and permit not
that they ever again be separated from you.

Through Christ our Lord.