Spirituality
Pencil Preaching





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“Who rejects me rejects the one who sent me” (Luke 10:16).

Bar 1:15-22; Luke 10:13-16

St. Therese of Lisieux

Today’s selection from Baruch continues the theme in yesterday’s reading from Ezra about the profound lament the post-exilic community expressed about their failure to keep the Covenant, which had led to their long exile in Babylon. They recall the history of God’s care for them beginning with the rescue of the Hebrews from slavery in Egypt and their journey across the desert into the Promised Land. God’s grace at each stage in their history has been met by ingratitude and resistance to the prophets sent to warn them. Acknowledging their unfaithfulness and evil is the foundation of renewal, a second chance to get things right.

Refusal to admit past mistakes blocks renewal. The national debate over how to accurately tell American history in schools illustrates this, especially with regard to institutional slavery, the treatment of native peoples and U.S. wars of expansion. Critics who say factual history is an assault on patriotism prefer amnesia that exonerates to truth that liberates Americans to take a path to accountability and course correction. Without this honesty, history’s lies “cling to us even today” (Bar

1:20), and fester within the culture wars fueled by self-serving charlatans and political hucksters.

In today’s Gospel, Jesus calls on his contemporaries to heed the lessons of history to avoid judgment. If the graces and signs given to Capernaum and Bethsaida had been poured out on pagan cities like Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented. The towns of Galilee have had every advantage, yet they court disaster by their refusal to hear Jesus’ call to renewal.

The Lectionary has no special readings for the commemoration of Saint Therese of Lisieux, known as the “Little flower” for her childlike trust in God’s love. Still, today’s Scriptures remind us that the missionary challenge of the church, one of Therese’s passions,requires a steadfast dedication to the truth in the face of opposition and disinformation.

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