

**4<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY ORD. TIME**  
**BEFORE YOU WERE BORN, I KNEW YOU**  
**January 29/30, 2022**

Many of us do not know or have forgotten that God knew us before we were born, and each was created for a purpose. Through the prophets, God made it clear that He knew and knows everybody even before we came into this world, and He will never forget us. Each and everyone is important before Him and each has something to offer to the society and the Church.

When Israel complained that God had forgotten her, He told her: "Can a woman forget the infant at her breast or a mother the child in her womb? But should even these forget, I shall never forget you" (Isa.49:14-15). The Psalmist also expressed how God made him: "You created my inmost self, knit me together in my mother's womb...so wonderfully you made me; wonderful are your works" (Ps.139:13-14). And today Jeremiah tells us what the Lord God told him, "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born, I consecrated you; appointed you a prophet to the nations".

Last week Jesus told His people why He came into the world and what He had come to do, to preach good news to the poor, heal the sick, and set captives free, among other things. Even before He came, the prophets had already prophesied about Him, and He affirmed it when He came.

Both Jeremiah and Jesus, came to the world for the purpose of bringing God's message of salvation to all nations. Jesus announced that the good news was also for the pagans, using the widow of Zarephath and Naaman as examples.

Each and every one of us was known by God before he or she was born, and each has been given a gift by which he or she may serve God. As we heard last week, some are called to be apostles, prophets, teachers, speakers, doctors, lawyers, exorcists, and many more other gifts. These gifts are given for the building up of the body of Christ, the Church.

From the lives of Jeremiah and Jesus, even though we are called to serve God in different ways, we shall face opposition and encounter difficulties. But St. Paul, in the second reading, reminds us that with love, we can live out our vocation without many problems. According to him, love will help us to

be patient, humble, and always consider the welfare of the other person. He continues to say: "Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things". This means we can persevere in our vocation when we are filled with the best of all gifts - love. We should, therefore, ask God to fill us with this greatest gift. Do we do things that we are supposed to do out of love, or out of compulsion or convenience? Life without love is empty.

God calls us to do something, and He will support us. He will not abandon us to our fate but give us the necessary graces we need. This is what He assured Jeremiah of; "I make you this day a fortified city, an iron pillar...They will fight against you; but they shall not prevail against you" Am I able to bear the hardships I encounter in my vocation as Jesus and Jeremiah did? Do I rely on the grace of God or on my own strength?

We learn also from the readings that everybody is unique and important, and God knows why we were born whether Jew or Greek. If God knew me before I was born and He loves me, then everyone born and the unborn are known and loved by God, and so we should love them. My parents did not know I would be a priest. Your parents did not know you would be a nurse or a doctor or a lawyer or an engineer, etc. it was only God who knew why He created you and me, even though I might have been conceived accidentally. If Jeremiah was consecrated in his mother's womb to be a prophet, then are we not predisposing experts and important people? God knows me and loves me; He knows you and loves you and we are precious to Him.