

First Reading Jer 14:2-10

14:4 Assyria cannot save us, we will not ride horses any more, or say, "Our God!" to our own handiwork, for you are the one in whom orphans find compassion.' 14:5 I shall cure them of their disloyalty, I shall love them with all my heart, for my anger has turned away from them. 14:6 I shall fall like dew on Israel, he will bloom like the lily and thrust out roots like the cedar of Lebanon

14:10 Let the wise understand these words, let the intelligent grasp their meaning, for Yahweh's ways are straight and the upright will walk in them, but sinners will stumble.

Gospel Reading Mk 12:28-34

12:28 One of the scribes who had listened to them debating appreciated that Jesus had given a good answer and put a further question to him, 'Which is the first of all the commandments?' 12:29 Jesus replied, 'This is the first: Listen, Israel, the Lord our God is the one, only Lord, 12:30 and you must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind and with all your strength. ... 12:31 The second is this: You must love your neighbour as yourself. There is no commandment greater than these.'

## REFLECTION:

Clive Huxtable of Beaconsfield WA signs off a letter in today's THE AUSTRALIAN. "When you think about it, the cancellation of mass (sic) by the Catholic Church can only be seen as a vote of no confidence in God ... The church deals with the ... pandemic in its own way, science is ... producing a vaccine."

Mr Huxtable wide of the mark, indeed! His familiarity with the Christian faith does not extend beyond a few old chestnuts acquired from who knows where!

Lest we afford him more nuggets to inflate his ignorance let's practice the very love of neighbour that Jesus includes on an equal footing with our love of God. For it is this commandment from Jesus that is the reason that our bishops have suspended the celebration of Masses.

Like the Israelites who suffered under Assyria's heel, the health crisis may cure us of any forgetfulness of the commandment to love God and neighbour.

God, in turn, will water us with his dew. We will come out of this time fresh as a blooming lily, strong as a cedar of Lebanon.