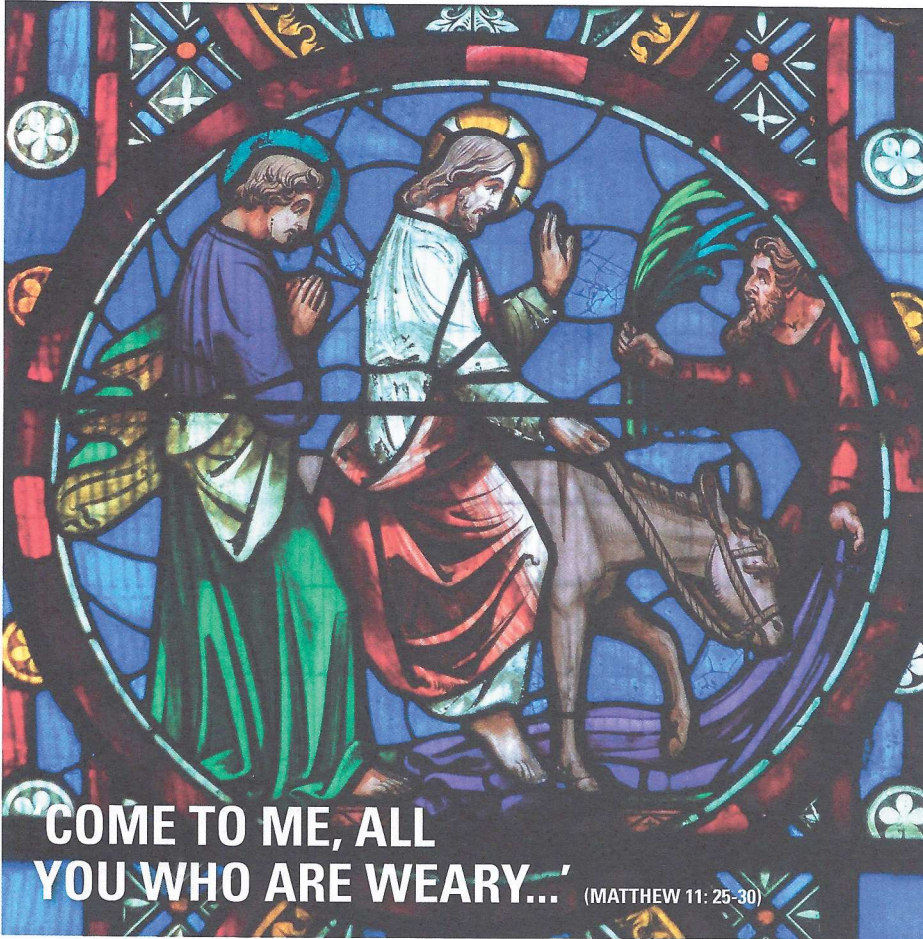


Sunday Message

14TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

THE WORD

Year A • 9 July 2023 • Psalter Week 2



Let us take the first reading and the Gospel as an inseparable pair for today's reflection. The prophet Zechariah announces a new kind of leader who in humility and mercy will arrive into Jerusalem on a young donkey.

This new leader or King will bring peace and love to a world at war. Five hundred years later, we move into the world of Matthew's Gospel and the proclamation of Jesus that he indeed is the King as foretold by the prophets. Those who come to know Jesus will know God, as Jesus will reveal him to us in word and action. But the crucial part of this Gospel is the humility of Jesus in a world that rejects him. The image from Zechariah of a King riding into Jerusalem on a donkey is helpful here. There is an offer from Jesus in today's Gospel. 'Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest ... for I am gentle and humble of heart.' With true humility and vulnerability, Jesus embraces the world with peace and mercy. This is a new kind of leadership or authority. There is a good chance that the people of Israel have never heard such words from a leader before. No wonder there is hesitancy in following Jesus and a genuine scepticism in hearing this message.

It takes a genuine leap of faith even for us listeners of the Word today, to trust God in our moments of weariness. To find rest for our souls in the loving and humble embrace of Jesus Christ. ■

SAY

God our Father, grant me the grace to never view myself greater than anyone. Let my heart always imitate your humility.

DO

Reflect a little this week on how God revealed himself to the world. Jesus arrived into town in the most humble of ways. How do we practise humility?

REFLECT

As a priest, the joy and privilege of having sons and daughters of my own is something I have long accepted as past me, which makes the blessing of nephews and nieces a treasure in my life. To much of my sisters' surprise, I have often appeared in the delivery ward of a maternity hospital within an hour of a baby's arrival with chocolates, flowers and a helium balloon to emotionally greet the family's new arrival. I'm probably a little over enthusiastic to be honest and at times it can be difficult to get past the strict ward nurses. I've been told time and time again that maternity wards are for parents and grandparents only!

The vulnerability of babies and small children is what strikes me most in watching these new arrivals into the family. They need so much care and love and attention. It's not possible for a parent to switch off for even a minute. Round the clock care is needed to ensure nappies are changed, bottles of milk are made and clean clothes are always in ready supply. Vulnerability is the mark of every baby and child.

A child's mind is not clouded by aggression or hostility. Through a child you can see a desire to learn and absorb information. Even a baby will have an astounding curiosity of all things happening around him/her.

And Jesus says today that the truth about God will be revealed to these children before it can be revealed to the learned and the wise. To know God is to know the most vulnerable and marginalised of our world. ■

LEARN

'There is more value in a little study of humility and in a single act of it than in all the knowledge in the world.'
(Saint Teresa of Avila)

'Prayer is the raising of one's mind and heart to God But when we pray, do we speak from the height of our pride and will, or out of the depths of a humble and contrite heart? Humility is the foundation of prayer.'
(Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2559)

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

Your merciful love, O God,
we have received in the midst of your temple.
Your praise, O God, like your name,
reaches the ends of the earth;
your right hand is filled with saving justice.

GLORIA

Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace to people of good will.

We praise you,
we bless you,
we adore you,
we glorify you,
we give you thanks for your great glory,
Lord God, heavenly King,
O God, almighty Father.

Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,
you take away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us;
you take away the sins of the world,
receive our prayer;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father,
have mercy on us.

For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father.
Amen.

COLLECT

O God, who in the abasement of your Son
have raised up a fallen world,
fill your faithful with holy joy,
for on those you have rescued from slavery
to sin
you bestow eternal gladness.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of
the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

FIRST READING Zechariah 9:9-10

A reading from the prophet Zechariah.
The Lord says this:
'Rejoice heart and soul, daughter of Zion!
Shout with gladness, daughter of Jerusalem!
See now, your king comes to you.
he is victorious, he is triumphant,
humble and riding on a donkey,
on a colt, the foal of a donkey.
He will banish chariots from Ephraim
and horses from Jerusalem.
the bow of war will be banished.
He will proclaim peace for the nations.
His empire shall stretch from sea to sea,
from the river to the ends of the earth.'
The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

PSALM Psalm 144

Response:
I will bless your name for ever,
O God my King.

1. I will give you glory, O God my King,
I will bless your name for ever.
I will bless you day after day
and praise your name for ever. (R.)

- 2. The Lord is kind and full of compassion,
slow to anger, abounding in love.
How good is the Lord to all,
compassionate to all his creatures. (R.)
- 3. All your creatures shall thank you, O Lord,
and your friends shall repeat their
blessing.
They shall speak of the glory of your reign
and declare your might, O God. (R.)
- 4. The Lord is faithful in all his words
and loving in all his deeds.
The Lord supports all who fall
and raises all who are bowed down. (R.)

SECOND READING Romans 8: 9, 11-13

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Romans.
Your interests are not in the unspiritual, but in the spiritual, since the Spirit of God has made his home in you. In fact, unless you possessed the Spirit of Christ you would not belong to him, and if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, then he who raised Jesus from the dead will give life to your own mortal bodies through his Spirit living in you. So then, my brothers, there is no necessity for us to obey our unspiritual selves or to live unspiritual lives. If you do live in that way, you are doomed to die; but if by the Spirit you put an end to the misdeeds of the body you will live.
The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION
Alleluia, alleluia! Blessed are you, Father,
Lord of heaven and earth,
for revealing the mysteries of the kingdom to
mere children. Alleluia!

GOSPEL Matthew 11:25-30

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew.
Jesus exclaimed, 'I bless you, Father, Lord of heaven and of earth, for hiding these things from the learned and the clever and revealing them to mere children. Yes, Father, for that is what it pleased you to do. Everything has been entrusted to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, just as no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him. 'Come to me all you who labour and are overburdened, and I will give you rest. Shoulder my yoke and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. Yes, my yoke is easy and my burden light.'
The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

PROFESSION OF FAITH
I believe in one God,
the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible.
I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the Only Begotten Son of God,
born of the Father before all ages.
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made, consubstantial with
the Father;

through him all things were made.
For us men and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,
(all bow during the next three lines)
and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the
Virgin Mary,
and became man.
For our sake he was crucified under
Pontius Pilate,
he suffered death and was buried,
and rose again on the third day
in accordance with the Scriptures.
He ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory
to judge the living and the dead
and his kingdom will have no end.
I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord,
the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is adored
and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.
I believe in one, holy, catholic and
apostolic Church.
I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness
of sins
and I look forward to the resurrection of the
dead
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS
May this oblation dedicated to your name
purify us, O Lord,
and day by day bring our conduct
closer to the life of heaven.
Amen.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON
Come to me, all who labour and are
burdened,
and I will refresh you, says the Lord.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION
Grant, we pray, O Lord,
that, having been replenished by such great
gifts,
we may gain the prize of salvation
and never cease to praise you.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Unless we look at a person and see the
beauty that is in them, we can contribute
nothing to them. One does not help a person
by discerning what is wrong, what is ugly,
what is distorted. Christ looked at everyone
he met, at the prostitute, at the thief, and
saw the beauty hidden there. Perhaps it
was distorted, perhaps damaged, but it was
beauty none the less, and what he did was to
call out this beauty.
Metropolitan Anthony Bloom