

## FOURTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

July 9, 2017 Cycle A

**Opening prayer:** *Jesus, meek and humble of heart, you invite us to come to you when we are weary and find life burdensome. You do not promise to remove our burdens, but you do promise to help us carry them and to give us refreshment when we are tired. Be with us today as we share your Word. Fill us with your wisdom so that we may know the message you have for us. Amen.*

**Sharing of life:** How have you experienced God's presence and activity recently?

**Facilitator reads focus statement:** In the first reading, Zechariah paints a picture of a gentle, meek and peaceful Messiah. This image is fulfilled in the portrayal of Jesus in the Gospel, where he describes himself as meek and humble of heart. In the second reading, Paul calls the Romans to live in the spirit of Jesus.

After proclaiming each of the readings, pause for a moment and then consider reading the commentary.

### FIRST READING: Zechariah 9:9-10

These verses are chosen for this Sunday because they describe a meek and humble Messiah, which Jesus is—meek and humble like the figure described in this reading—without pomp and majesty. The meek donkey is contrasted to the warrior horse which is a symbol of war. Zion (another name for Jerusalem) will shout for joy when the King arrives in the city—not as a mighty conquering warrior but as a just Savior who will banish war and institute peace.

### RESPONSORIAL PSALM 145

This psalm extols God's kindness and compassion as well as his outreach to the lowly and forgotten.

### SECOND READING: Romans 8:9, 11-13

Paul continues his discussion on baptism. Living out one's baptism means that one will live in the spirit of Jesus as opposed to "living in the flesh." To live "life in the flesh" is to live life independent of God: self-sufficient and self-reliant with no relationship with God. On the contrary, one who uses his/her personal freedom to tune in and respond to the leadings of the Holy Spirit lives a "life in the spirit" which is centered on God and his values. Life in the flesh leads to death whilst life in the spirit leads to eternal life.

### GOSPEL: Matthew 11:25-30

This Gospel begins with Jesus' shout of joy, *not* on account of the so-called "wise and learned" who do not recognize his true identity, but for the "little ones" with humble and open hearts who "get it." A

'know-it-all' attitude is a huge block hindering us from receiving God's self-revelation.

Jesus speaks about the special and unique relationship that exists between him and his Father. It is really a statement about the divinity of Christ. In Jesus we find the Wisdom of God. He reveals the mind and heart of God to us.

The passage ends with Jesus' beautiful invitation to the "heavy burdened" to come to him. The Pharisees and scribes have made the Law of Moses a heavy burden by adding to it a multitude of legalisms. On another level, faith in Christ helps all of us to deal with the burdens of life.

### FAITH-SHARING QUESTIONS

1. What verse spoke to you and why?
2. What makes you "shout for joy"?
3. What might cause us or others to live self-sufficient lives independent of God?
4. Can you name any heavy burdens or crosses that have turned out to be a blessing?
5. In the Gospel, Jesus tells us that he is gentle and humble of heart. Who models this spirit for you? What can help us grow in gentleness and humility?

### RESPONDING TO THE WORD

Name one way you can act on today's readings. Suggestions: Tackle with prayer and effort one "flesh attitude" that hinders your spiritual growth. Give your burdens to Christ. Reach out to someone who is carrying a heavy burden.

## CONCLUDE WITH PRAYERS OF PETITION AND INTERCESSION

If someone in the group is carrying a heavy burden at this time, perhaps the group can gather around that person and pray over him/her. Pray for the grace to be meek and humble of heart and do what you can to lighten the burden of someone who is carrying a heavy load. ©

*“You may not realize it when it happens, but a kick in the teeth may be the best thing in the world for you.”*

- Walt Disney

## For Trust and Confidence in God

*My God, I want to have confidence in your love, but so many things seem to hold me back: past wounds, past hurts, past betrayals, past sins—mine and others.*

*Open my eyes. Open my heart.*

*Enable me to take the leap of faith that is needed now.*

*Holiness isn't a matter of starting to love you some time in the future, or even tomorrow.*

*I don't have to wait until I become a better person, more worthy, more virtuous.*

*It's a matter of trusting in your mercy today, just as I am.*

*You showed this to the saints; show me, too, and give me a spirit of great confidence.*

*I ask this through your beloved Son, our merciful Savior. Amen.*

- Elizabeth Ruth Obbard