

July 5, 2020

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Welcome to the Fourteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time!

We are very pleased to announce that the church exterior painting project is scheduled to commence in the second week of July!

I invite you to celebrate the Word of God by taking time to read and reflect on the message of the Holy Spirit for you during this celebration.

FIRST PART – SCRIPTURE READINGS

Reading 1 [ZEC 9:9-10](#)

Thus says the LORD:

Rejoice heartily, O daughter Zion, shout for joy, O daughter Jerusalem! See, your king shall come to you; a just savior is he, meek, and riding on an ass, on a colt, the foal of an ass. He shall banish the chariot from Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem; the warrior's bow shall be banished, and he shall proclaim peace to the nations. His dominion shall be from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth.

Responsorial Psalm [PS 145:1-2, 8-9, 10-11, 13-14](#)

R. I will praise your name for ever, my king and my God.

I will extol you, O my God and King,
and I will bless your name forever and ever.

Every day will I bless you,
and I will praise your name forever and ever.

R. I will praise your name for ever, my king and my God.

The LORD is gracious and merciful,
slow to anger and of great kindness.

The LORD is good to all
and compassionate toward all his works.

R. I will praise your name for ever, my king and my God.

Let all your works give you thanks, O LORD,
and let your faithful ones bless you.

Let them discourse of the glory of your kingdom
and speak of your might.

R. I will praise your name for ever, my king and my God.

The LORD is faithful in all his words
and holy in all his works.
The LORD lifts up all who are falling
and raises up all who are bowed down.

R. I will praise your name for ever, my king and my God.

Reading 2 [ROM 8:9, 11-13](#)

Brothers and sisters:

You are not in the flesh; on the contrary, you are in the spirit, if only the Spirit of God dwells in you. Whoever does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. If the Spirit of the one who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, the one who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also, through his Spirit that dwells in you. Consequently, brothers and sisters, we are not debtors to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. For if you live according to the flesh, you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.

Alleluia [CF. MT 11:25](#)

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

Blessed are you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth;
you have revealed to little ones the mysteries of the kingdom.

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel [MT 11:25-30](#)

At that time Jesus exclaimed:

“I give praise to you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, for although you have hidden these things from the wise and the learned you have revealed them to little ones. Yes, Father, such has been your gracious will. All things have been handed over to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son wishes to reveal him.”

“Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart; and you will find rest for yourselves. For my yoke is easy, and my burden light.”

SECOND PART – REFLECTIONS/APPLICATIONS

First Reading

To Revive the Spirits

This prophecy of Zechariah is a continuing exhortation of Haggai who prophesied earlier. Both are post-exilic prophets. God spoke to the people through their prophecies to remind them of his commitment to fulfill his promise. At this time, the rebuilding of the Temple becomes the focus of

God's action. Both prophets are facing a tremendous challenge in getting their message to the people. First, the people are still feeling the effects of their long years of exile. Second, many of the elite and educated are still in exile and those who remained are unable to rebuild the cities and organize social structures. Moreover, the Gentiles had settled the abandoned lands. Under this background Zechariah spoke to the people to lift their spirits and convey a message of hope. The immediate fruits of the prophecy was the restoration of the Temple, renewal of the priesthood and purification from their sins. But at the same time God also spoke through his prophecies the coming of the Messiah. That is why Zechariah resonates repeatedly within the Gospel. (Mt 21:5; Zec 9:9), (Mt 26:15; Zec 11:12-13; Mt 27:5), (Jn 19:34, 37; Zec 12:10).

Second Reading

Fullness of Peace

In the First Reading the Prophet Zechariah prophesied the Messiah who will establish peace to the nations. (Zec 9:9-10) There were kings who achieved peace more or less to a certain degree, but the fullness of peace can only be found in our Lord Jesus Christ. In the reading, Paul a recipient of such peace, proclaims the realization of Zechariah's prophecy. This peace transcends the immediate fruits of the blessings promised by God upon the restoration of the Temple. In his Letter to the Romans, he clearly articulates the limited freedom that the Law can only provide before the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ in his life. (Rom 7:6) With the spirit of a New Law of Christ, Paul proclaims his new-found relationship with the Lord which assures him eternal life and lasting peace. (Rom 8:6; 11-14)

Gospel Reading

True Greatness

In the beginning of the Gospel of Matthew chapter 11, right after he gave instructions to his twelve disciples, he went to the cities to teach and preach. But this time John was already in prison and could only hear news from outside about the wonderful works of our Lord Jesus Christ. Thus, he sent his disciples to personally ask, "Are you he who is to come, or shall we look for another?" In this particular incident, our Lord did not give a direct response; instead he simply enumerated the miracles he performed. In this way he reminded John of what the prophet Isaiah said, "Then will the eyes of the blind be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped. Then will the lame leap like a deer, and the mute tongue shout for joy. Water will gush forth in the wilderness and streams in the desert." (Is 35:5-6) These are the signs that the prophets spoke of the coming of the Messiah for true indeed our Lord is the promised one whom John carefully asked, "Are you he who is to come, or shall we look for another?" (Mt 11:3) John's lack of confidence to recognize our Lord reveals the limited knowledge he has as a prophet.

Then in the following instance our Lord took this opportunity to teach what knowledge the prophets are capable of according to their prophetic gifts and the knowledge revealed according

to the gracious will of the Father. (Mt 11:25-26) For this reason, even if John the Baptist is considered greatest among those born of women, still he is no greater than the least in the kingdom of heaven. (Mt 11:11) Thus, in the Reading our Lord made an astounding revelation as he intimated with the Father the knowledge that can only be understood in the context of the relationship between the Father and the Son. "All things have been delivered to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him." (Mt 11:27) Only by becoming a child of God can a humble believer with a pure heart see the face of God in Our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the perfect image of the Father. (CCC 151, 240, 473, 2563, 2779)

REFLECTIONS/APPLICATIONS

Paul devoted the entire chapter of 1 Cor 13 on the greatness of love. He first started to enumerate specific gifts of the Holy Spirit such as prophecy, knowledge, speaking in tongues, fortitude, and faith. One can have all these but if he has no love, he is nothing. Having said that, Paul now focuses on the qualities of an authentic love. "Love is patient and kind; love is not jealous or boastful; it is not arrogant or rude. Love does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrong, but rejoices in the right. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things." (1 Cor 13:4-7) Upon reflection we see the essence of love as self-sustaining quality compared to other gifts. It is forbearing, encouraging and humble. It endures. The rest of the gifts are equally important as well but without it they could not last either. Thus "faith, hope, love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love." (1 Cor 13:13)

In the First Reading we see the importance of the prophet Zechariah how God spoke through him to the people to give them hope and remind them of his covenant with them. Through the prophet's words the people revived their spirits and enthusiastically rebuilt the Temple, renewed the order of the priesthood and underwent purification. While all these processes are going on the prophet constantly directs their understanding that all these events are pointing to the realization of God's promise, the coming of the Messiah. In the Second Reading, Paul testifies to the truth that the freedom he received from our Lord Jesus Christ is the proof of the fulfillment of the messianic rule prefigured in the rebuilding of the Temple and the immediate fruits that the people received through it. Although the prophets are very popular because of their gift of prophecy which effectively carried out the continuity of God's plan, nevertheless, they are not a measure of greatness before the eyes of God. Thus, in the Gospel Reading our Lord is praising the Father for this special knowledge which is not given to the wise and the learned: "I thank thee, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to babes; yea, Father, for such was thy gracious will." (Mt 11:25-27)

Let us now examine ourselves with the following questions in order to deepen our understanding of the message of our Lord Jesus Christ.

1. The prophecy of Zechariah was to give encouragement to the post-exilic Jews who had just returned to Jerusalem. While the actual rebuilding promised blessings to the people at the same time it also realized the messianic realm of God's plan of salvation. Do I recognize the plan of God working in every phase of my life? Do I long to go back to my prayers every time I miss it? Am I aware of a broken piece in my life that can only be repaired by our Lord Jesus Christ?
2. The biggest upset of the people of the Old Covenant is to fail to identify the Suffering Servant (Zec 12:10-13), (Is 53) as our Lord Jesus Christ himself. Do I continue to misidentify him by avoiding his constant invitation to love others?
3. Even John the Baptist struggled to recognize our Lord after hearing the reports of the miracles he performed. Do I fail to recognize our Lord because I also ask the same question, "Are you he who is to come, or shall we look for another?" (Mt 11:3-4) How can I testify to the truth that my Lord Jesus dwells in me?

Fraternally yours through Our Lord Jesus Christ,

Fr. Roy
Pastor