

**READINGS AND REFLECTION
FOR THE 14TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME**

(from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops
<http://uscbb.org/bible/readings/062120.cfm>)

FIRST READING - FROM THE PROPHET ZECHARIAH 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 saviour 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.

The Word of the Lord.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM Ps 145:1-2, 8-9, 10-11, 13-14

RESPONSE: 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.

RESPONSE: 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.

RESPONSE: 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.

RESPONSE: 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.

RESPONSE: I WILL PRAISE YOUR NAME FOR EVER, MY KING AND MY GOD.

A READING FROM THE FIRST LETTER OF ST PAUL TO THE ROMANS 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 who dwells in you.
Consequently, brothers and sisters,
we are not debtors to the flesh, to live according to the flesh.
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.

The Word of the Lord.

Blessed are you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth;
you have revealed to little ones the mysteries of the kingdom.
Matthew 11:25

A READING FROM THE HOLY GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW 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 labour 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.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

REFLECTION

Zechariah says, “Rejoice!...Your King will proclaim peace!”

St Paul says, “The one who raised Christ from the dead will give life to you!”

Jesus said, “Come to me...I will give you rest...learn from me!”

Amid all that is happening, let’s trust God who will empower us day by day.

The rhetoric of leaders of a range of nations today is harsh. Conflict and war affects 69 countries, involving 840 militia/guerrilla/separatist/terrorist/anarchic groups. 65.6 million people around the world (one in every 113 people in the world) have been displaced. More than 500 000 people have died from Coronavirus. In the midst of all this and more, God is with us!

Judah, in the time of Zechariah, was an economically depressed, politically powerless, and generally a hopeless state. Zechariah reminded the people of the earlier prophets’ visions of God’s presence amongst them and of their calls for justice. He also called them to let their leadership and responses reflect God’s ultimate hopes for them:

“Rejoice heartily, daughter of Zion, shout for joy!

See your king comes, a just saviour, riding peacefully on the foal of an ass.”

St Paul uses the images of our human spirit and flesh to describe what affects our wellbeing and our life with God. Our human spirit is that part of us that is attracted by goodness, beauty, and truth. Through the Holy Spirit, it yearns for and seeks completion in God. Without our spirit, we would be totally turned in on ourselves and consumed by 'flesh'. Our flesh is that part of us that doesn't want to be told what to do. It is stubborn, refuses correction, and doesn't want to have a thing to do with God. Paul asks 'Where is our heart? Out of what within us, do we respond to all around us?'

Matthew presents Jesus never ceasing to reveal God's merciful offer of light and salvation. Those who want to see themselves as 'wise' may continue to reject Jesus but Jesus reaches out to the 'poor in spirit' – those who know they depend on God. Out of his lowliness, faithfulness and intimacy with the Father, Jesus invites us to come to him, to learn from him. Jesus fulfils the law and the prophets, and reveals God. As it was for Jesus, we disciples need to be ready for rejection. Discipleship is like a "yoke" but a light yoke because Jesus walks with us, bearing it with us. He will bring us to the rest for which we long.

A STORY OF THE HUMAN SPIRIT – thanks to Joy Scott

In 1932, amid the Great Depression, one in three workers was unemployed. A scrawny trapped rabbit fed a family for a week. On country roads, broken men walked from one farmhouse to another seeking jobs and food. Outside Leongatha, Victoria, World War 1 hero and farmer Captain Leo Gwyther suffered a broken leg and was unable to work. His farm faced ruin. Up stepped his nine year old son, Lennie. With the help of his pony *Ginger Mick*, Lennie ploughed the farm's 24 paddocks, working the farm until his father got back on his feet. How to reward him?

Lennie had followed obsessively the construction of Australia's greatest engineering marvel of his time – the Sydney Harbour Bridge. He asked his parents if he could attend; they agreed. So nine year old Lennie saddled up *Ginger Mick* and with a water bottle, toothbrush and spare clothes, they began the 1000 km journey...alone!

Even with no mobile phones nor social media, the word spread about the boy, his horse and their epic trek. The people of country towns turned out to welcome them. They survived bushfires, freezing winds and an attack by a 'vagabond'. In Canberra, PM Joseph Lyons invited Lennie to afternoon tea. 10 000 people greeted them in Martin Place, Sydney. They were in the official Opening Parade at the Bridge, appeared at the Royal Show and was sought after by Don Bradman. Lennie Gwyther raised the spirit of the people and fired many to do things rather than just talk....

Lennie returned to his normal home, school and farm life in Leongatha. He served in the Pacific during World War 2 and then became an engineer with Holden in Melbourne. Thank you God!