

FOURTEENTH  
SUNDAY IN  
ORDINARY TIME

YEAR A



**Prayer**

*Psalm 145:1-2, 8-11, 13-14*

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

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

The LORD is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.

The LORD is good to all, and his compassion is over all that he has made.

All your works shall give thanks to you, O LORD, and all your faithful shall bless you.

They shall speak of the glory of your kingdom, and tell of your power,

Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and your dominion endures throughout all generations.

The LORD is faithful in all his words, and gracious in all his deeds.

The LORD upholds all who are falling, and raises up all who are bowed down.

**Reading the Word**

*Zechariah 9:9-10*

Rejoice greatly, O daughter Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter Jerusalem!

Lo, your king comes to you; triumphant and victorious is he, humble and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

He will cut off the chariot from Ephraim and the war-horse from Jerusalem; and the battle bow shall be cut off, and he shall command peace to the nations; his dominion shall be from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth.

*Romans 8:9, 11-13*

But you are not in the flesh; you are in the Spirit, since the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him.

If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit that dwells in you.

So then, brothers and sisters, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the

FIRST READING

Zechariah 9:9-10

PSALM

Psalm 145:1-2, 8-11, 13-14

SECOND READING

Romans 8:9, 11-13

GOSPEL

Matthew 11:25-30

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.

*Matthew 11:25-30*

At that time Jesus said, "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will.

All things have been handed over 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.

"Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

*Scripture quotations from  
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## Hearing the Word

### “The Path to God’s Kingdom of Peace”

World peace is an ever continuing human quest, which, sadly, has never been successful. The liturgy of the word for this Sunday gives instructions on how a Christian can find and experience God’s peace in the midst of a troubled world.

The first reading comes from the second part of the book of Zechariah. The prophet announces the restoration of Zion – the term which refers to the Jerusalem Temple and the hill on which it was located. The vision of God’s triumphant procession through the lands of the surrounding pagan nations in Zechariah 9:1-8 concludes with God’s arrival at his “house” – the Jerusalem Temple. The presence of God in the Temple is followed by yet another triumphant entry – that of a human king. His entrance to the city is a solemn one, with inhabitants of Jerusalem invited to “rejoice greatly” and “shout aloud”. While rejoicing and shouting for joy were usually associated with celebration of God as the king (cf. Psalm 47), Zechariah encourages the same joyful celebration for a humble human ruler.

The prophet does not reveal this ruler’s name, but his Davidic origin as he arrives riding on “a colt, the foal of a donkey”. This detail connects the event to Jacob’s blessing of Judah in Gen 49:10-11, where the king from his tribe

is portrayed in this manner. The donkey, unlike the horse, was an animal used for transport and never for war. Riding on a donkey symbolizes arriving in peace and for peaceful purposes.

Furthermore, this Davidic king “will cut off the chariot from Ephraim and the war-horse from Jerusalem”. By removal of the tools of war he will put an end to conflict and will rule in peace. These images certainly evoke the time of the greatest Israelite king, Solomon, David’s son, who ruled “from the River to the ends of the earth” enjoying peace on all sides (cf. 1 Kgs 5:1.4). The future messianic king in Zechariah’s vision will have no need for weapons, war horses or chariots. He will be the king of peace.

The second reading from Paul’s letter to the Romans continues the comprehensive portrayal of the Christian existence rooted in God’s grace manifested in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. This unique Christian existence is sustained by the working of the Spirit of God in and among the faithful. In Romans ch. 8, the apostle defines the Spirit’s crucial role in the Christian life through the striking concept of “the dwelling” of the Spirit of God “in you” – the Spirit’s indwelling. This indwelling echoes God’s presence with Israel during the desert journey from Egypt to the Promised Land, when God dwelt in the midst of the people in the Taberna-

cle. This provisional tent was eventually transformed into the Jerusalem Temple. Paul emphasises the vital role of the Spirit for Christian life, stating that “anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him”. There is no Christianity without the Spirit. The Spirit’s indwelling not only makes Christian life in the present world possible, but also guarantees life after death, since, according to Paul “if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he [...] will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit that dwells in you”.

Considering these statements, it becomes abundantly clear that a person in whom the Spirit dwells is at peace with God. The Spirit’s guidance ensures obedience to God’s commands and harmony with the Creator. Living without the Spirit and “according to the flesh” isolates a person from God and leads to fear and eventual death. Thus, for Paul, the guarantee of true peace in this world and in the world to come rests in placing oneself under the guidance of the Spirit, which leads to a life of peace, and resulting participation in God’s kingdom present already on earth among his faithful.

In the Gospel passage Jesus thanks the Father for graciously revealing “these things” not to “the wise and the intelligent” but “to infants”. What are the “things” Jesus refers to? To answer, one has to go back to Mat-

threw 11:5 where the works of the Messiah are described as “the blind receiving their sight, the lame walking, the lepers being cleansed, the deaf hearing, the dead being raised, and the poor having good news brought to them”. Through “these things” accomplished by Jesus, the new messianic age becomes visible “to infants” – the simple and ordinary community members.

Jesus makes the Kingdom of God a reality that the needy and neglected can experience first-hand. Through him, and only through him, God’s salvific presence and action in the world becomes perceptible. In other words, God reveals himself through Jesus humbly approaching those overlooked by others. Hence, all who “are weary and are carrying heavy burdens” can, thanks to Jesus, find rest and peace flowing from God’s reassuring presence. The only thing required is “taking Jesus’ yoke and learning from him”. These images refer to accepting Jesus’ teaching and his model for life. He assures his followers that living according to his teaching is not burdensome but “easy and light”, because it means following the master who is “gentle and humble in heart”. These are the same words which appear in Zechariah’s image of the Messianic King.

Jesus is the one who makes peace on the earth possible. Being the Son of God with

perfect knowledge of, and complete union with, the Father, he assures those who choose to follow him that they will find lasting peace, because what he teaches comes directly from the one who sent him.

The meekness and gentleness of Jesus are the signs of Messianic peace. Zechariah envisioned this peace, describing a “humble king” entering the earthly Jerusalem. For Christians, the path to that peace in the midst of the troubled world is twofold. Paul teaches that through accepting the Spirit’s indwelling and following the Spirit’s guidance, a person may live in a state of peace with God and with assurance of eternal peace at the resurrection. Second, through following Jesus’ teaching, revealed even to the simplest, one becomes a disciple of the meek and gentle Messianic King, and each one can find peace during their days on the earth. The paths to God’s peace are living in the Spirit and following Jesus’ teaching. These lead to God’s kingdom of peace of which the Psalmist said, “Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and your dominion endures throughout all generations”.

### **Listening to the Word of God**

Every so often, a person needs to ask himself or herself themselves what they really need in order to be the best human being they could pos-

sibly be. Among the many possible answers, the need for “peace” stands out as a very significant one. Then, the next question should be about how to achieve that peace. The whole world speaks of peace and there are many individuals who see achieving peace as their life goal. Yet, most of these attempts fail and very few individuals achieve peace within themselves and their lives.

The people of Israel at the time of Jesus greeted each other with the greeting of peace – “Shalom”. This ancient practice was established by God already at the time of Moses and Aaron who understood that peace is a blessing, that it comes from God, and that it is necessary for our wellbeing. But peace does not fall from the sky suddenly and without active human participation. It is necessary to recognize that peace requires the right conditions to develop and needs human cooperation to be maintained.

Listening to Jesus we find the answer to our quest for peace. He says: “Come to me”! By these words he indicates that those who come and “stay” with him, like the first disciples in the Gospel of John, are on the right path to his kingdom of peace. But accepting this invitation means more than just staying with Jesus; it means living according to his teaching. Jesus invites us to live in his



kingdom by following his footsteps. Such life is the way to the kingdom of peace.

Implementing the teaching of Jesus means introducing changes in our environment and society. There is a lot of bullying on our streets, schools and places of work. In our societies there are many groups that thrive on conflict, living off violence and brute power. It is common for many, particularly youth, to become gang members or join militias doing work for some politicians. Security forces often abuse their mandate and do not bring about peace. Violence and power lure many with the promises of influence and money. Yet, in the long run we all know that violence destroys not only its victims but also its perpetrators. The change Christians must bring into the violent world, is to show that Jesus teaching on the primacy of forgiveness and peace can be followed, and that, in the long run, it brings lasting positive effects. Jesus always stood on the side of the weak and neglected. When we take it upon ourselves to follow Jesus' teaching and imitate his life example, then we are truly on the way to achieving peace and harmony. Jesus fought with no weapons but he used kindness and forgiveness. His focus was on helping others to live better lives. Doing this he brought peace to many hearts, and showed that peace on earth

is possible. Through baptism we become followers of this king of peace. Today's liturgy assures us that by journeying with him we can reach peace, and become instruments of peace in this world.

### Proverb

When  
there is  
peace  
in the  
country,  
the chief  
does not  
carry a  
shield.

### Action

#### Self-examination

Am I at peace with myself, others and with God? How does my peace manifest itself?

Examine your presence and actions within your family and community. Are they contributing towards harmony or are they disruptive?

### Response to God

Jesus calls you to walk through life imitating him. Today I make a commitment to learn more about how he dealt with others in order to know how to be an instrument of God's peace in the world.

### Response to your World

Being an instrument of God's peace and a follower of the King of Peace, I will find a way to spread peace and harmony around me.

Which particular situations destroy peace in your neighbourhood? Is there anything that you personally, or your group can do about it? How would you engage with others in bringing positive change for harmony and stability?

### Prayer

Lord, make me an instrument of Your peace.

Where there is hatred, let me sow love; where there is injury, pardon;

where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope;

where there is darkness, light; where there is sadness, joy.

Amen