

## Commentary on the Readings for July 9, 2023

### The 14th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Have you ever had, or do you now have, someone with whom you can just be yourself? Perhaps that someone is a spouse, friend or close relative who is comforting because of the honesty and sincerity that exists between the two of you. To be there with you when needed gives one peace and rest. The readings for today tell us that Jesus Himself wants to be that person for you. He tells us to "Come to me ... and I will refresh you." All the readings reflect this theme.

In the **First Reading**, from the ***Prophet Zechariah (9:9-10)***, we hear the prophet exhorting the people of Israel to turn back to the Lord with sincerity of heart and He will accept them into His presence. He will come, not as a conquering warrior, but as a "Prince of Peace," and not as the evil kings of the monarchy who rode in on horse and chariots, but he will come on a lowly beast of burden. The latter is a reference to His entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday.

The **Responsorial Psalm (145:1-14)** is a song of praise and thanksgiving for the goodness and benevolence of God. The psalmist exhorts us to put our trust in the Lord and not in the foolishness of this world. The last two lines of this portion of the Psalm are repeated in many songs and prayers. They should give us comfort because they tell us of a loving God.

The **Second Reading** is from ***St. Paul's Letter to the Romans (8:9-13)***. This passage is an excerpt from Paul's longer teaching on the "the flesh versus the spirit." He is saying that we, as committed Christians, are living in the spirit and not in the flesh such as a glove is moved by the hand within it. The important point is that those of us who are committed to Jesus Christ and are living according to His teachings need not worry about the things of this world because we have the Spirit of Christ (the Holy Spirit) dwelling within us, giving us that special peace. However, for those who only say or think they are Christians but live otherwise, these do not have the Spirit of Christ within them; and they "do not belong to Christ." Remember, "Belonging to Christ" means more than just "going to church" on Sundays.

The **Gospel Reading** is from ***Matthew (11:25-30)***. This scripture passage is one of the most comforting in all the gospels. Here Jesus invites us to go to Him to be refreshed. When we hear of all the troubles of the world today, it is comforting to know that there is someone we can go to who will refresh us and help us to deal with the trials of daily life. If you think this is just "pious talk" be brave enough to try it. Search out a quiet, private spot and just sit and ask Jesus to come to you in spirit. Keep asking. It might take a while, but surely His comforting peace will enfold you. If you continue, you will feel the anxiety leave your body and soul. This, then is the time to talk to Him as if He were your divine counselor, your closest friend, because that is what He is, or wants to be for you. The Father has given Jesus all the power in the world to do this, so why don't you take advantage of it? Something to think about during your prayer time this week!

**MFB**