

14<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time, 9 July 2023

Scriptures: Zechariah 9:9-10; Romans 8:9,11-13; Matt. 11:25-30

Homily: Fr. Ken

In the Gospel this weekend, we find Jesus revealing to his disciples and to us the very heart of God. And the knowledge of this is something that comes to us as a pure gift. God our Creator, in an act of total generosity, makes it known to whomever God wishes, realized in the power of the Holy Spirit through Jesus Christ. Those to whom God reveals this truth, and who respond to it positively are then called “children of God” because they become members of God’s family.

In the Gospel, we hear these well-known words of encouragement from Jesus, so especially relevant in our challenging days of the coronavirus pandemic. Jesus says: “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”.

At the core of Jesus’ ministry is a compassion that reflects the tender love at the heart of God. Jesus’ invitation for all those who are struggling to come to him is an active one. Jesus holds out his hand, drawing us to himself so that we may follow in his footsteps.

Following Jesus and growing in discipleship requires that we are willing to face the cost of discipleship. Learning from Jesus, and reveling in his gentle and humble heart, we can start to appreciate how the vision of the kingdom of God, in the first reading from the prophet Zechariah, is not only a real possibility, but something already in our midst and something really worth working for.

Coming to Christ and knowing his loving care is an amazing experience. We have all heard stories about people being down and

out, especially these days, and then encountering Jesus in the midst of their desperation. There are so many accounts of people who have experienced the tender mercy and kind compassion of our God.

It is one thing to talk about how Jesus has been so generous with us, offering us shelter in the midst of our crises. It is another thing to become that which we have received. Are we ourselves prepared to become like Christ by seeking to be a safe haven for others? In our baptism we are called to be Christ-like. So being people who can embrace and hold safe those who are struggling, for example the families with children who are in need of food, will hopefully be high on our list of priorities. This may appear difficult, but being a place of refuge for those who need comfort, need not be as risky as it sounds. It asks us to open our hearts, as we did as a parish last weekend in our Food Drive.

It asks us to open our hearts, even though our hearts may feel inadequate and conflicted. We can trust that Christ, dwelling deep within, can communicate his tenderness through each one of us. All we have to do is to trust him and allow some of our natural gifts of hospitality to be built upon by grace.

For many of us who live very active busy lives, we meet people everyday who need a listening ear, or a shoulder to cry on, or some gentle encouragement. We should not be afraid to reflect the love of God by reaching out to them, be they immigrants, refugees, homeless, or otherwise poor.

The Holy Spirit will guide us and Jesus will touch their hearts. Then we will show we are truly his disciples, as we embrace others in the way that Jesus did.