

July 5, 2020

14th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Matthew 11:25-30

At that time Jesus said in reply, "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 the childlike. 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."

Background:

The first part of this text, verses 25-27, is also found in Luke's gospel. (Luke 10:21-22) Therefore scholars believe that it comes from an earlier source that both Luke and Matthew used as they composed their gospels. The style of the text is different from what is found in most of the synoptic gospels. It is like more prayerful texts found in John's gospel. The second part of this text is unique to Matthew.

In Jesus' day, the rich would become "patrons" of others who were not members of their family. The patron would treat these clients as if they were members of the family. In some cases, the "patron" would use an agent who would act on their behalf to arrange the relationship. Their relationship benefited both the patron and the client. The client received the benefits of being included in the patron's family, and the patron received the esteem of the community. The client was expected to make the generosity of the patron known. In Jesus' culture, esteem and honor were so important that it was considered foolish not to become a patron if one had the wealth that would enable him to do so. That is the point of the parable that Jesus tells of the foolish landowner who had the wealth, but instead of taking on clients, decided to build larger barns so he could store up his wealth and not have to work. (Luke 12:16-20)

Looking at this gospel through the patron/client cultural lens, God the Father is the patron, those who are burdened are the clients, and Jesus is described as the broker/agent for the Father. In the first verse of this gospel text, God is described as "Father, Lord of heaven and earth." The Father is being described as one who is responsible for bringing all of creation into existence. Verses 26 and 27 describe Jesus as the One the Father has chosen to act as His agent. The Father has sent Jesus to those who "labor and are burdened." They are invited to take a yoke that is easy and a burden that is light. It is an invitation to a relationship with God, the creator of the universe, who desires to make them part of God's family and not a slave of some earthly master.

Reflection Questions:

1. Take some time to make two lists, side by side. On one, list the qualities of the wise and clever, and on the other, list the qualities of the childlike. Do you recall moments in your life when the qualities of one side or the other came to the fore?
2. Jesus describes his relationship with the Father as intimate and exclusive. How you respond to this description?
3. What are the burdens of your life?
4. How would you describe your personal prayer?

5. What happens within you when you praise God?
6. Jesus talks about God as having “hidden these things from the wise and the learned,” yet revealing them to “the childlike.” How do you find yourself responding?
7. In the gospel, Jesus invites everyone to come to him and take on his yoke. How do you find yourself responding to his invitation?
8. In the gospel, Jesus talks about God’s relationship from different perspectives. Can you take time to talk with God about that part of this gospel that invites you into a deeper relationship with God, yourself, and others?

The gospel background and reflection questions are written by Fr. Paul Gallagher, OFM. They are edited by Sister Anne Marie Lom, OSF and Joe Thiel. The excerpts from the Sunday readings are prepared by Joe Thiel. To be added to the distribution list, send your name and email address to annemarie.lom@gmail.com

Our Gospel Reflections are hosted by the Franciscan Sisters of Christian Charity. Their homepage is <https://fscclalledtobe.org/>. One link there is labeled Franciscan Gospel Reflections. A click on the icon will take you to the Gospel reflections for the upcoming Sunday. By following this link, you will be able to blog or comment on the reflection questions. The material will be posted on Fridays and will be available until the following Friday when the new material is posted.

Excerpts from the Lectionary for Mass for Use in the Dioceses of the United States of America, second typical edition © 2001, 1998, 1997, 1986, 1970 Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, Inc., Washington, DC. Used with permission. All rights reserved. No portion of this text may be reproduced by any means without permission in writing from the copyright owner.

Excerpts from the Readings for July 5, 2020, the Fourteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

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 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.

I will praise your name for ever, my king and my God.
I will extol you, my God and King, and every day will I bless you and praise you.
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.
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.
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.

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,

he will give life to your mortal bodies also, through his Spirit that dwells in you.
Consequently, 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.

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."

Excerpts from Zechariah 9:9-10; Psalm 145:1-2, 8-14; Romans 8:9, 11-13; and Matthew 11:25-30