

14th Sunday in Ordinary Time (A)  
(Zechariah 9:9-10 / Matthew 11:25-30)  
09.07.2023

Dear brothers and sisters.

“Come to me all you who labour and are overburdened, and I will give you rest”.

When Jesus spoke these words, He was speaking, first of all, to the Jews who were overwhelmed by the weight of the 613 commandments of the Law of Moses. It was impossible to obey all these commandments. To follow scrupulously all the precepts of the Law was a source of discouragement and pain for many Jewish contemporaries of Jesus.

It was to these that Jesus said: “Come to me, and I will give you rest”. The rest Jesus proposed to them was to realise that they were saved by grace, and not by the strength of their arm or even by their good works. They were saved by grace and not by the fulfilment of all the commandments of the Law of Moses. They were set free by grace. Declaring this Jesus was not abolishing the Law. The law remained important to them as it does to us, but not to save us, rather to help us remain free under grace so as to avoid falling back into slavery. One of the best illustrations of this point is the Ten Commandments which were given by Moses to the people of Israel after they had been set free from slavery in Egypt. The purpose of these commandments was not to reduce the people to slavery again, but to help them remain free.

With these same words – come to me all you labour and are overburdened, and I will give you rest – Jesus was also speaking, more widely. He addressed himself to all those who were overburdened by the worries of life. And here, each one of us feels concerned. Life is not short of trials of all sorts: health, work, household budget, family life, social and public life, and even, for those engaged in religious or monastic life, the trials of the common life! Everybody, one day or another, meets with trials. To all of those who suffer, to each one of us, Jesus has a word of life to offer, a word of life which brings us rest.

Come to me, all you who are weeping for the death of a loved one; I will come and share your solitude and your pain, murmuring in your ear that I have overcome death and offer you a share in my victory.

Come to me, all you migrants whom oppression and fear have expelled you from your homeland, your household and the horizons of your childhood, because with me, you will be in God’s country.

Come to me, all you are struggling with your life of faith, because my word will make your desert flourish again.

Come to me, all you whose life consists in caring for others day after day, even night and day, all you who know what to give of yourself or to forget yourself means, because with me that kind of death will bear fruit.

Come to me all, you who weep because you are unable to forgive; I am gentle and humble in heart, and the humility and the gentleness of my heart will transform yours.

What is the kind of rest that Jesus promises us? Will he take away all our burdens and remove every yoke from our shoulders? No, most of the time our burdens will remain, even if it can

happen that God listens to our prayers in unexpected ways. Let us think of the sick who are cured in Lourdes and in so many other places. But this is not how things happen normally. Most of the time, our burdens don't change, but we change.

What is the change we have to undergo? Jesus was gentle and humble in heart; we have to become gentle and humble in heart.

We change when we humbly consent to allowing ourselves to be helped carry our burden, when we humbly consent to carry our burden with the help of Jesus. It is easier to carry a burden with the help of someone than it is to carry it alone.

We change when we assume our burden – whatever it may be – like the burden Jesus invites us to carry today, and when, at the school of Jesus, we choose to carry it in a gentle and humble way. Jesus made his way through his passion and death with gentleness and humility. He did not rebel against what was happening to Him, but accepted it with gentleness and humility. Jesus entered into the eternal rest of God through his passion and death with gentleness and humility.

If we are overburdened by what befalls us in life, if we lose all inner strength to carry our burdens, this is often because far from accepting what happens to us with gentleness and humility, we revolt, and become angry and aggressive.

If we are overburdened and lose hope, it is often because we interpret our pains and our sufferings as a rejection on God's behalf or as an absence of his love, forgetting that He is always with us to help us carry our burden.

At Jesus' school, we don't escape trials but we learn how to give them a meaning and to orientate them towards life. The burden remains, but becomes light! It is no longer a burden we want to throw off, but Jesus' burden which we engage ourselves to bear. It is His love within us which bears the burden, I mean God's love for us and our love for God.

If we want to receive the rest that the Lord promises us, we have to be humble. To be humble is always to remember, it is never to forget all that God has done for us: He created us out of love and gave us commandments to obey in order to remain free human beings. He is always with us to help us. He is with us for ever.

Let us ask the Lord for the grace of a gentle and humble heart: a heart like his own heart. The rest he promised us will be given to us. His rest will be ours!