

Fourteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time [a]

July 6, 2008

Readings

Zechariah 9:9-10

Romans 8:9, 11-13

Matthew 11:25-30

Calendar

July 4: Independence Day in the United States

July 11-13: Convention for the Common Good in Philadelphia www.commongoodconvention.org

Quotes

Consequently, the promotion of justice is at the heart of a true culture of solidarity. It is not just a question of giving one's surplus to those in need, but of 'helping entire peoples presently excluded or marginalized to enter into the sphere of economic and human development'.

Pope John Paul II, World Day of Peace Message 2001

If you look carefully you will see that there is one thing and only one thing that causes unhappiness. The name of that thing is attachment. What is an attachment? An emotional state of clinging caused by the belief that without some particular thing or some person you cannot be happy.

Anthony de Mello SJ

The fundamental sin is exploitation, whether it be expressed in the domination of male over female, white over black, rich over poor, strong over weak, armed military over unarmed civilians, human beings over nature. These analogously abusive patterns interlock because they reset on the same base: a structure where an elite insists on its superiority and claims the right to exercise dominative power over all others considered subordinate, for its own benefit. ... What is being looked for is not simply the solution to one problem, but an entire shift of world view away from patterns of dominance toward mutually enhancing relationships.

Elizabeth Johnson CSJ, She Who Is, 27-28

This is the hope which sustains the Church ... that, by the grace of God, a world in which the power of evil seems once again to have taken the upper hand will in fact be transformed into a world in which the noblest aspirations of the human heart will triumph, a world in which true peace will prevail.

John Paul II, 1 January 2002

Thoughts for your consideration

The scriptures today seem to have a strong “counter-cultural” message. The scriptures challenge us to look at our world and its values in a critical way.

Our culture seems to value power and control. However, the scriptures today give us the image of a savior that comes with humility, “meek and riding on an ass.”

In a society overwhelmed with many examples of greed and large scale corporate abuse, the scriptures reminded of the virtues inherent in a simplicity of life and a gentleness of spirit. Wealth, control, and domination are not the central values of Jesus Christ.

In a world filled with the weapons of war and spending on the ways of violence, the scriptures speak of a savior who banishes the horse, the chariot and the warrior’s bow. The scriptures certainly challenge our world which invests so many resources into fighting wars and procuring weapons for war.

In a world where the international trade system and the world economy seem to disadvantage those who have little, we are reminded that “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.” A focus on wealth and money will certainly “kill” the spirit and freedom of God.

The gospel reminds us that this counter-cultural message is a message of liberation. As we let go of all the craziness of our culture, we will find “rest” and finally really be alive. Then, justice and peace can truly take over.

Questions for Reflection in your Faith Sharing Group

When do you feel burdened by the pressures of our culture?
What things would you like to let go of so as not to be a “debtor to the flesh?”

+++++

Zechariah talks about the destruction of weapons and the proclamation of peace.
What would such talk sound like today?
What weapons and policies need to be destroyed?

Actions – Links

We read in Zechariah today:
*“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.”*

Pax Christi USA is the national Catholic peace movement committed to the gospel imperative of seeking peace through nonviolence. For info and resources go to their web site at <http://www.paxchristiusa.org/>

For info about how the US spends money on war go to:
<http://www.warresisters.org/piechart.htm>

For some information about the global arms trade go to:
<http://www.cdi.org/program/index.cfm?programid=73>

“Crazy Facts”

Top Ten States with Highest Percentage of Children under 18 Living in Poverty

District of Columbia	32.6 %
Mississippi	29.5 %
Louisiana	27.8 %
New Mexico	25.6 %
West Virginia	25.2 %
Arkansas	24.3 %
Oklahoma	24.3 %
Texas	23.9 %
Alabama	23.0 %
Kentucky	22.8 %

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006 American Community Survey, August 2007

Prayers of Intercession

Response: May we proclaim peace and life to all the nations.

We pray for our enemies, for those with whom we are in conflict.

We pray for those who do not share our Christian values.

We pray for those whose lives are dominated by greed and materialism.

We pray for seek to control and manipulate others.

We pray for those who turn to military might and weapons to get what they want.

We pray for those who fail to use our economic systems for the common good.

Prayers

Forbid it, Lord, that our roots become too firmly attached to this earth, that we should fall in love with things. ...

Then shall we see all of life in its true perspective. Then shall we not fall in love with the things of time, but come to love the things that endure. Then shall we be saved from the tyranny of possessions which we have no leisure to enjoy, of property whose care becomes a burden.

Give us, we pray, the courage to simplify our lives. So may we be mature in our faith, childlike but never childish, humble but never cringing, understanding but never conceited. So help us, O God, to live and not merely to exist, that we may have joy in our work.

In your name, who alone can give us moderation and balance and zest for living, we pray.
Amen.

Written by Peter Marshall at the Christian Resource Institute at <http://www.cresourcei.org/>

+++++

O God, we pray for all those in our world
 who are suffering from injustice:
For those who are discriminated against
 because of their race, color or religion;
For those imprisoned
 for working for the relief of oppression;
For those who are hounded
 for speaking the inconvenient truth;
For those tempted to violence
 as a cry against overwhelming hardship;
For those deprived of reasonable health and education;
For those suffering from hunger and famine;
For those too weak to help themselves
 and who have no one else to help them;
For the unemployed who cry out
 for work but do not find it.
We pray for anyone of our acquaintance
 who is personally affected by injustice.
Forgive us, Lord, if we unwittingly share in the conditions
 or in a system that perpetuates injustice.
Show us how we can serve your children
 and make your love practical by washing their feet.

Mother Teresa