

**14<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Ordinary Time**  
**Cycle A**  
**July 09, 2023**

1<sup>st</sup> Reading: Zechariah 9:9 – 10.

*God is a God of humility and peace.*

Psalm: Psalm 145:1 – 2, 8 – 9, 10 – 11, 13 – 14.

*I will praise your name forever, my king and my God.*

2nd Reading: Romans 8:9, 11 – 13.

*If by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.*

Gospel: Matthew 11:25 – 30.

*God's burden is easy, and God's yoke is light.*

God is good, **All the time**; All the time, **God is good**.

My friends, am I the only one or is there a totally different tone to Matthew 11:25ff from what we heard last weekend in Matthew 10:37ff? When I read it last week a chill ran down my spine. You might say, "Well deacon joe, Jesus was speaking to a different audience!" All true, and really, last week we heard anyone who loves mother, father, brother, sister, daughter, son, spouse more than me cannot be my disciple. Also, it won't be a cake walk, you will have to carry your own cross. Then this week we hear, turn your troubles over to the Lord for my yoke is light and my burden easy. Oh, by the way Matthew 11:25 is one of the most often used texts in official Church liturgical celebrations. It truly is nice to know that God is on our side and wants us to find the right people to make our walk with. It is God's gift, and we don't, not one of us, do it alone. Also, we do well to remember this walk will involve suffering; as Fr. Fitzgerald would always remind me, "there is no consolation without desolation." So, it seems it is a both-and and still isn't it good to know that God loves and cares about us, not for anything we have done, just for who we are.

I really love this prophecy of Zechariah, who declares the Messiah will be a person of peace who will enter our world humbly riding on a donkey. There will be no chariots, bows, arrows, spears: War will be no more. Can you imagine our world without guns, without mass shootings, without countries waring against other countries?

St. Paul gives us a clue in his letter to the Romans. For the Spirit to become vibrant in ourselves we must let go of, turn our backs on, walk/run away from our human inclinations toward sin, greed, and power. We do and we get, we find, life: a life worth living, worth sharing. So where does that all bring us? Right here, where we are: about to put our lives in their entirety on the altar (in the form of bread, wine, and treasure) as an offering of praise to our God, who loves us and cares for us so much it is beyond what we can imagine. It is our sacrifice of praise and none of us can do this alone, so we do it together as God's beloved community. In return, because this is not a stagnant conversation (prayer), God gives us God-self in the form of that same bread and wine so that we can, at least momentarily, reach or see our mountaintop: the Divine becomes one with us. This journey is sometimes difficult and often fraught with pain and with God's help it becomes do-able and even easy and always worthwhile. Thanks be to God; we leave here carrying at least a speck of the divine to share with our world. Where else would you want/choose to be? Peace my friends.

**God is good. All the time. All the time. God is good.**