

Reading 1 : Zec 9: 9 - 10**Reading 2 : Rom 8: 9, 11 – 13****Responsorial Psalm : Ps 145: 1 - 2, 8 – 11, 13 - 14****Gospel Reading : Mat 11: 25 – 30****Scripture: Mathew 11: 25 - 30**

At that time Jesus declared, "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to infants; 26 yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. All things have been delivered to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and any one to whom the Son chooses to reveal him. Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

Meditation: *Pride - the root of sin*

Jesus's prayer contrasts the "wisdom of the world" with the wisdom which comes from above - from the Father of heaven who is all wise and good. Jesus' prayer contains an implicit warning that pride can keep us from the love and knowledge of God. What makes us ignorant and blind to the wisdom of God? Certainly intellectual pride, coldness of heart, and stubbornness of will shut out God and his wise rule and fatherly care for our personal lives. Pride is the root of all vice and evil and the strongest influence propelling us to sin against God and to do wrong to our neighbor. Sinful pride first vanquishes the heart, making it cold and indifferent towards God. It also closes the mind to God's truth and wisdom for our lives. What is pride's flaw? It is the inordinate love of oneself at the expense of others and the exaggerated estimation of one's own knowledge, power, importance and position over others.

Simplicity and lowliness of heart

Jesus contrasts pride with child-like simplicity and humility. The simple of heart are like "little children" in the sense that they see purely and simply without any pretense or falsehood. They instinctively recognize their utter dependence and reliance on others - especially those who can teach and form them to live strong, healthy, mature lives. No one can grow in wisdom and maturity unless they are willing to be taught and formed in how to live wisely and to distinguish between good and evil, truth and falsehood. Simplicity of heart is closely linked with humility - the queen of virtues that forgets oneself in order to love and serve others for their sake. The humble of heart are the freest of all - emptied of vanity and self-concern they can single-mindedly focus on the welfare of others. The Lord Jesus is our model. He proclaimed to his disciples, "I am gentle and lowly of heart" .. Jesus came "not to be served, but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for the many" . Jesus' "gentleness" is not weakness or powerlessness. It is "strength under control" which is at the service of good rather than evil. Jesus humbled himself to lift us out of our misery and slavery to sin in order to raise us up to glory with him and the Father. Jesus came not to bruise the weak but to heal, to pardon and not to condemn, to restore us to abundant life by defeating sin, Satan, and death. It was love for his eternal Father and for each one of us that motivated Jesus to humble himself to death on the cross in order to rescue us from slavery to sin and death. The Lord Jesus shows us the truth path of love and victory, freedom and joy, through the cross that defeats pride and hatred, greed and selfishness, guilt and condemnation. True humility - which is the opposite of false modesty or feeling bad about oneself - frees us to pursue what is good, right, holy, and true. Scripture tells us that *God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble* . Only the humble in heart can receive the wisdom which comes from God and the understanding of God's perfect goodness and plan for our lives. Do you acknowledge your utter dependence on God and do you trust him with your whole heart, mind, and being? The greatest reward for those who seek the "summum bonum" or "greatest good" is to be united with God - the one and only true source of peace, joy, and happiness that will last forever.

Through Jesus we have access to God the Father

To see Jesus is to see what God is like. In Jesus we see the perfect love of God - a God who cares intensely and who yearns over men and women, loving them to the point of offering us his Only Begotten Son who freely gave up his life for us on the cross as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Paul the Apostle tells us that Jesus is the image of God (Colossians 1:15). He is the perfect revelation of God - a God who loves us totally, unconditionally, and without reservation. What can separate us from the love of God? Only our own stubborn pride, willfulness, and rebellious attitude towards God and his will for our lives. Jesus makes an incredible promise to those who acknowledge him as their Lord and Savior. If we pray in his name - the name *Jesus* means *God saves* - then the Father in heaven will hear us as if his only begotten Son was speaking to him directly. That is the unity, blessing, and promise he wishes for each one of us. And that is why we have the confidence and boldness to pray as Jesus taught his disciples, *Our Father who art in heaven... give us this day our daily bread, and deliver us from temptation.*

The sweet yoke of Jesus

What does the yoke of Jesus refer to in the Gospel. The Jews used the image of a yoke to express submission to God. They spoke of the yoke of the law, the yoke of the commandments, the yoke of the kingdom, the yoke of God. Jesus says his yoke is "easy". The Greek word for "easy" can also mean "well-fitting". Yokes were tailor-made to fit the oxen well. We are commanded to put on the "sweet yoke of Jesus" and to live the "heavenly way of life and happiness". Jesus also says his "burden is light". There's a story of a man who once met a boy carrying a smaller crippled lad on his back. "That's a heavy load you are carrying there," exclaimed the man. "He ain't heavy; he's my brother!" responded the boy. No burden is too heavy when it's given in love and carried in love. Jesus offers us a new kingdom of righteousness, peace, and joy. In his kingdom sins are not only forgiven but removed, and eternal life is poured out for all its citizens. This is not a political kingdom, but a spiritual one.

Question for Community Faith Sharing

1. How can you trust in God's love and submit to his will and plan for your life?
2. Do you bring your troubles to the Lord with expectant faith that he can set you free? Please explain how?
3. Why should you pray to your Father in heaven with Joy and confidence in his perfect love and care for you?

"Lord Jesus, give me the child-like simplicity and purity of faith to gaze upon your face with joy and confidence in your all-merciful love. Remove every doubt, fear, and proud thought which would hinder me from receiving your word with trust and humble submission."