

Fourteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time: The Strong One

In this Sunday's Gospel, Jesus calls us to come to Him and then tells us that He is "Meek and humble of heart." What does that mean, meek and humble of heart? How can we understand this? I was turning this over in my mind when an image came to me that I see every Sunday and that you most probably witness every day. Let me set it up this way: We are blessed to have many families in our parish. They take attending Church together seriously and as a family. I love seeing them come in and getting their tribe in line. The largest member of the family is most often the father. Some of our fathers are very big men. I love it when I see them carrying their baby into the church. I really have a smile when I see a huge man carrying his one or two year old little girl. She might be tiny, and he may be large, but she has taken control of her Dad. And he is quite happy about it. As one of our new father's said, "I have become my little girl's jungle gym. I lie on the floor, and she climbs all over me. She slobbers on me, or worse, but I love it." I am sure that the toughest man in our parish is a pussycat when it comes to his baby girl. He will be fierce when it comes to protecting his daughter, but for her, he is meek. He is also humble of heart. None of our fathers, or mothers for that matter, think that they are too lofty, too important to care for their children. From changing diapers to drying tears, good parents cannot be arrogant. Their love for their children won't let them be anything other than humble of heart.

And Jesus said, "Come to me, I am meek and humble of heart." He loves us like a good parents loves His child. Only more so, infinitely more so.

There are many times that we feel overwhelmed by the world, our responsibilities, even our efforts to grow in the most important relationships of our lives, for many of you, your marriages, for me, my relationship to my people, for all of us, our relationship to God. We watch the news, listen to commentaries and witness all we hold dear being mocked. We read how our children and Teens are being exploited by drugs, alcohol, sex, etc. We see images of turmoil in the world, war in Ukraine, Iran, Lebanon, and other areas of the world, and terrorism everywhere. We are upset by mass shootings and fear for our children's safety as well as our own. We witness all this and feel that the world is too much for us. "Come to me," the Lord says, "I am meek and humble of heart. I know how you feel. You think the world is falling to pieces and you fear for your family. Entrust them to me, entrust yourself to me. I will care for you. I will care for your family. I am God, but I have not distanced myself from you. I love you too much to do that. I am that big man, and you are my little child. Come to me."

Many respond, "But how can I provide all that my family needs." Jesus answers, "I am all that they need," everything else will fall into place.

And we are called to give him our relationships. Relationships take a lot of hard work. Marriages take a lot of hard work as husbands and wives continually sacrifice their own wants, even their own points of view, for the sake of those whom they love so much. Relationships with people outside of our family take work. It takes humility to allow other people to be themselves, not to be what we think they should be. Our

relationship to God takes the greatest amount of work in our lives. Every day is another chance to let Him enter deeper into our lives. But this means denying ourselves. It means setting more and more time for Him. It means sacrifice when what we really want to do is pull a Jonah and go Southwest when God tells us to go Northeast. Sometimes we come before the Lord and say, "I can't seem to get along with anyone, beginning with myself, and including you." And Jesus says, "I've got you, I'll teach you how to love. Just let me hold you, and care for you. I want to help you. Come to me, I am meek and humble of heart."

And the words of our second reading from Romans 8 encourages us. We are not in the flesh. We are in the Spirit. The Spirit of God dwells in us. We need to put our trust in God. He is our hope, our hope not just for the future, but our hope for the present. Jesus tells us to pick up our crosses and follow Him, follow Him to Calvary living His sacrificial love, and follow Him to the joy of eternal union with God.

And just as the strong father, carries his little baby into Church, our Lord carries us into the Father's eternal Temple, into heaven. His actions are motivated by love; His love for us, and His love for His Father who told Him to bring us to 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."

The One who carries us is strong, stronger than our fears, stronger than our struggles, stronger even than that man who used to carry us into Church.

Infinitely stronger.