

July 9, 2017

So now, I get to watch you looking over there like the 10 o'clock Mass has been doing for several months now. Ron has graciously come over and does the 8 o'clock and he stays for the 10, as well. So, we have moved Sunday into the high-tech zone, now we've got to move Saturday night into the high-tech zone. But, we're still trying to get a choir for 4 p.m. So, what is that like? The middle ages?

An elderly woman, was in a nursing home. She received a visitor from her parish one day. The visitor said, "How are you feeling?" "Oh", said the lady, "I'm worried sick". "What are you worried about dear", her friend asked. "You look like you're in good health—aren't they taking care of you?" "Yes, they are taking very good care of me". "Well, are you in pain?" "No, I feel very good, I've never been in pain". "Then what are you worried about?" The lady leaned back in her rocking chair and said, "Every close friend I've ever had, has died and gone to heaven. And I'm worried that they are wondering where I went!"

In our first reading, we have the prophet Zachariah. The Jews were in bondage for 300 years. Fifty of those years were from the Kingdom of Babylon. The rest were from the Greeks. Albert the Great came in and conquered them and started persecuting them. So not only were they conquered and under persecution, Zachariah is telling them, "Hey, we will be at peace once again, we will be independent once again". And they were for a very short time, before the Romans took over. But he is saying, "Rejoice, because you're king, you're anointed, you're Messiah." All the kings were anointed in their ceremonies, so they were messiah, a savior.

He will come, will arrive on a baby donkey. He shall banish the chariot and the horse and the warriors bow. He shall banish the weapons of war. Kings used to go out to war on a horse, taking all these weapons. And if they won the battle, they would come back riding on a donkey, with all the weapons hidden away. So, when Zachariah was saying this, the people recognized it. That they will have a king, an anointed, a savior. So that they will have peace once again. So they got a little bit hopeful there. I think it's interesting, when you were Baptized, were you anointed with oil? All of you were. That means all of you are messiahs, all of you are saviors, and it should be to somebody else. I was anointed with oil, same thing. So we have that same kind of responsibility that Jesus did, only not on the larger scale. We're all messiahs, we're all saviors, we're all God's anointed. Just like he was talking about here. And he says, "He will be meek and riding on a baby donkey". Well, in our world today, meekness is synonymous with weakness. And that's not the case at all. To be meek is to be super strong. It's not to let people run over you. Its super strength. Did the Lord seem meek to us? No, what he went through was not meekness. Meekness requires a concerted effort of many virtues. It requires self-mastery which forestalls and checks your impulse to go to anger. So it's related to temperance. It requires tolerance of the failings of others. Not the whole part of the person but the failings of others. So, it requires patience and fortitude. It calls for forgiveness of injuries, and benevolence towards all. It comes from charity. So, to be meek is to be in total control of yourself. Not giving in to the impulses, not giving in to the emotions, not giving in to all these things that are baser, lower, animal instincts. Society says, "Oh, let it out!" And we have. Everybody is letting it out in the clothes they're wearing, and their emotions. Oh well, he is angry, that's ok. He'll say he's sorry and then that's ok. I think we should go back to togas! So we're not going to let it all out. I'm sick of looking at some of this being let out. So...

Meekness is a super strength. Its supernatural, superhuman. When I think of meekness, I think of David Carradine in Kung Fu. He was a martial arts expert, but yet you had to push him so far for him to use his martial arts. And then all he was using them for was the salvation and welfare of others. Because he knew, to get angry, was to lose the battle. General Sun-tzu, an old Chinese general who wrote a book on the art of war said, "He who gets angry, has lost the war". Lost the battle. So, meekness is not weakness. It's a super strength. So, when Jesus comes into the gospel and says, "I am meek and humble of heart". Those are two super powers. Meekness and humility—two super powers, because they mean mastery of self. You're in control of the situation in meekness. You're not giving it away to somebody else but in humility, you realize that God is your strength. Everything comes from God. When Jesus says He's meek, He's not talking about weak. He is not talking about rolling over or being a wimp. He's talking about being in control of yourself. And humble, means He recognizes that he is not in charge of his life, God is. But it's interesting, because He talks about it, in the next phrase, a yoke. In our culture, yokes, the wooden things that are put over people's shoulders, have become synonymous with slavery--servitude. And that's not the case. In many parts of the world, a yoke is used to carry heavy loads. A yoke is used to carry, say, two buckets of water from the well that is two miles away instead of one. It's a helper. It makes life easier. In Jesus's time, a yoke was made for two oxen to plow the field together. It was custom made. The carpenter would whittle on it and whittle on it, and work on it, until it fit the back of the oxen perfectly. So, when Jesus says, "Take my yoke", That's custom made for each one of us. But more than that, if one oxen pulls the plow, how hard is it? It's very hard. But if two oxen pull the plow what happens? You only do half the work, half the load. When Jesus said, "Take my yoke upon you", He's got a custom-made yoke for us and He is going to carry half of our load, half of our suffering, half of our pain, half of our grief, and half of the hardness of our life at this point in time. He wants to carry half of it so that we don't have to carry all of it. Think about that. And we think of it as slavery. No. Jesus is saying, "I want to take over half of your problems". Does that give you a sense of hope? Does that give you a sense of relief? It does if you listen to Him. But so many times we say, "Well, I can do it by myself". How many times have we gone out to try and do something by ourselves and it was too hard? And when we got somebody else, piece of cake. Okay. It's the same thing with Jesus. He wants to make it a piece of cake. So, when Jesus says, "Take my yoke upon you and learn from me". Meek, humble, He's talking about how to be super strong in the face of the temptations of this world and in the face of evil. He is also talking about super strength when we feel the weakest, when we feel the downest, (if that is a word) when we feel the least powerful in our lives. He is right there walking with us. It's not like that footprints poem, no, He is not carrying us, He's giving us half the load so that He can make it easier for us. He says, "My yoke is easy and my burden light". Yeah! If you give Him half of your burden, how much lighter is it? That's the only way we will ever know peace, if we are in control of ourselves, and if we master our emotions and our pride. So, let me give you three things to work on, to be able to grow in meekness and humility. Recognizing now, that it's a super power, a supernatural power and not weakness, of not being walked on or that kind of thing. **First prayer;** Every time we pray sincerely, not half-heartedly, not just, oh I better get it over with. But, every time we pray sincerely, we acknowledge our dependence on God. An act of humility. Saint John Vianney use to say, "God commands us to pray, but forbids us to worry." It's an old variation on the old saying, "courage is fear that has said it's prayers". **Second;** Speaking well of other people. Every time we observe and praise the good works of others, we loosen the shackles of arrogance and envy that bind our humility. Every time

we speak well of others, we are reinforcing our humility. We are not the center of the universe. **Third;** Obedience to God's will. Whenever we conscientiously fulfil our responsibilities to life, follow our conscious, the teachings of the Church, we are humbly reversing the arrogant rebellion of original sin. So, three things; Prayer, speaking well of other people, and obedience to Gods will. Which one of those do you think is the hardest, in our day and age? Number two, right. Speaking well of other people. If you turn on the TV and you watch the news and you watch politics and you watch all this. Is anybody speaking well of the other person? No, because we don't watch it then. We want our blood pressure to rise, get angry. That's going to be the tough one. Every time we see something, someone make a mistake, or every time someone messes up in your life. Speaking well of others, finding good points in them, is going to be the hardest. And the thing is, the society we live in today, needs our humility, our meekness. We need to be able to lead the society, the community, our families. Recognize that those are two supernatural super powers. Because if we don't, who will? God bless you

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