

1-LEARNING FROM THE LORD WHO IS MEEK AND HUMBLE OF HEART, HOMILY BY FATHER FRANCIS ON 14<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, 5 JULY 2020.

Dear brothers and sisters, last Sunday we dwelled on the theme "Called to be Prophets and Witnesses of God's love, like Elisha and the Shunamite hospitable couple. Ultimately the good examples of Elisha and the Shunammite couple point to our Lord the supreme model. This is evident in the readings this Sunday. The first reading and the gospel speak of the humility of the Lord.

The first reading says, "Behold: your king is coming to you, a just Savior is he, Humble, and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey" (Zechariah 9:9). You remember that this is one of the readings we usually have on Palm Sunday, celebrating the triumphant entry of the Lord into Jerusalem to bring about our redemption. The Savior did not come with horses, chariots or weapons of war. He came on a donkey, proclaiming peace for the whole world. The Word of God says, "Our King will banish the chariot of Ephraim and horse from Jerusalem" (Zechariah 9:10). Ephraim and Jerusalem represent the twelve tribes of Israel [1]- the totality of God's people and symbolic of the whole world. The reign of our king is from sea to sea. He is the God of all nations!

Similarly, in the gospel, the Lord says, "I give praise to you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth for although you have hidden these things from the wise and learned you have revealed them to little ones" (Matthew 11:25). Drawing us

closer to the beating of his heart, Jesus says, "Come to me all you who labor and are over-burdened, and I will refresh you. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart and you will find rest for yourselves" (Matthew 11:28-29).

Dearly beloved in Christ, here is the heart of the matter – learning from the Lord who is meek and humble of heart. If we are going to light the world with the fire of God's love, we must learn from the one who is meek and humble at heart. That is the way. If we are going to be true to our prophetic calling, if we are going to be heralds of the king of kings - If we are going to be God's agents in bringing to an end systemic violence, racism and prejudice, our supreme model cannot be Karl Marx and Josef Stalin but Jesus Christ, our Lord and King of peace. We cannot expel darkness with darkness. It must be expelled with light. The Lord invites us to lay the burdens and sorrows of our hearts at his feet. When we try to carry the weight of the world's problems on our heads alone, without any reference to Jesus, we are crushed and more problems and heartaches are created. Learning from Christ means following the example of surrendering to the will of the Father in all things. It is humility that helps us seek God's will and not our own. The Lord gave us the supreme example in the Garden of Gethsemane, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet, not as I will, but as you will" (Matthew 26:39). **Apply this model to all of life's challenges and responsibilities!**

Take, for example the challenges that faced a single mother raising her two boys by herself. The children were doing badly in school because they had no guidance at home. Mom was not well educated. She had to take three cleaning jobs in order to keep a roof over their heads and put food on the table. Struggling so hard to make ends meet--and the ends never met, mom realized she needed the Lord's help. She called her two sons, Curtis and Ben and said, "I am not happy that both of you are at the bottom of your classes. I am going to ask the Lord and he will tell me what to do." She did! She took her burden and laid it down at Jesus' feet. A Miracle happened. She received inspiration. She told the boys to stop watching TV all the time and go instead to the local library. They were to borrow two books of their choice every week, read them and make a book report on them. The next miracle was that the boys started doing just that. At first it was awkward but they kept at it. They fell in love with reading at an early age. In no time, they were both at the top of their classes. The end of the story is that these boys grew up to become professionals. Curtis became a rocket scientist and Ben became a world class neurosurgeon at John Hopkins Hospital.

How can we apply this principle given to us by the Lord? It is simple - taking our burdens and labors to the gentle Savior and learning from him. The first step is that we cannot just live according to flesh or as if God does not exist. To live solely in the flesh or as if God does not exist is a gateway to death (Romans 8:13). We have to be people of deep faith and humility. We need to open our hearts and souls to the Spirit of the living God. Simply put, "If the Spirit

of the one who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, the one who raised Jesus from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies (Romans 8:12).

You can take this to the bank. Only God can bring out the best in us, of course, with our cooperation. He does not force. The Lord unceasingly stretches out his hand saying, "Come to me all you who labor and are burdened and I will give you rest. Learn from me for I am meek and humble of heart" (Romans 11:28-30). To heed this invitation is the beginning of a new life. It requires humility, of letting go our agendas and seeking the Lord's agenda and embracing it. Humility is nobility. The gospel is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes" (Romans 1:16).

[1] Just as Washington and Rome represent all of the USA and Italy.