

FOURTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (7/5-6/2008)

Zechariah 9/9-10, Psalm 145, Romans 8/9-13, Matthew 11/25-30

“...If only the Spirit of God dwells in you.”

When he wrote those words, Paul must have been doing a bit of wishful thinking.

What truly did he expect from the first Christians in the great city of Rome?

He hoped they were living a life full of the Spirit of Jesus.

If he were to come into our midst this weekend in July, would he not say the same thing to us?

The Gospel passage today offers us some insight into that Spirit.

Jesus says to his Father: *“...for although you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, you have revealed them to little ones.”*

In another place, Jesus suggests that, unless we become like little children, we cannot enter the Kingdom of Heaven.

So, one conclusion we could draw would be that we should leave all our preconceived notions behind and become as open to God’s surprising grace as children are open to surprise and joy in their lives.

The children have much to teach us – if, once again, we are open.

After reassuring us that he himself is one with the Father, Jesus goes on to suggest another aspect of his Spirit we would do well to imitate.

“Come to me all you who labor and are heavily 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 is light.”

Some might reject those words as being altogether too Pollyannaish.

Life is difficult; no two ways about it.

But Jesus has his two feet placed firmly on this earth, and he does not waste words.

His exhortation reminds me of a friend of mine who was struggling with some powerful family problems which only seemed to be getting worse.

She was at her wits’ end, not knowing what to do next.

So she started to pray, to turn over her situation to this Jesus who had reassured her he would help with her burdens.

And she told me with wide-eyed amazement that it worked!

The problems are still there, but they seem less weighty, less discouraging.

And she felt the peace that only Jesus can bring.

As we said above, this may all sound rather unreal, except that I am telling you a true story.

Jesus did not just say things to sound good or to offer false optimism.

He is from God and he speaks the startling truth that only God can make happen.

On this July 4th holiday weekend, peoples’ minds and attention will be given to cook-outs and parties and fireworks’ displays. We celebrate freedom.

Again the cynics might say that, with all that is happening in the Middle East, in our economy, in our housing and job markets, in our lives, there is not much reason for rejoicing.

Don’t believe them; Jesus has promised us his never-ending total love and support.