



Fourteenth Sunday Ordinary Time 2005.

Zechariah 9: 9-10 Romans 8: 9-13 Matthew 11: 25-30

As we listen to Zechariah somewhere war is being waged. We don't use the term war very often now, we choose softer terms. War evokes images of blood, destruction, families torn apart, innocent suffers; words like *collateral damage* and *mopping up exercises* spare us from facing the reality of what we are permitting to happen to our world. And war today is about greed, its about power over, and its about the generation of a rhetoric to make it more palatable.

“Rejoice heartily, daughter Zion, shout for joy!
See your king comes, a just saviour,
riding peacefully on the foal of an ass.”

The King is the Messiah, who can be found on the holy mountain, the image of God-with-us. With his coming all weapons of war are banished. His rule spans all people and nation. His love encompasses the globe.

So how did Jews and Christians come to believe that war was a way of solving inter-racial and inter-territorial disputes? Why do we hear people today speak of God and evangelisation with military metaphors? How can we reconcile the words spirituality and warfare?

Jesus said that if our hearts are full of violence it will pour out in our attitudes and speech. Listen to the language of sport. It is often violent. Violence on the playing field is tolerated whereas the same action in another public place would be prosecuted. Bullying is common in homes, schools, workplaces in government and in international relations. Followers of Jesus cannot be part of this. We need to be active in our challenge to it.

Paul uses the images of spirit and flesh, to describe the change brought about by belief in Jesus. He does not promote a dualism between flesh and spirit as some people read it, but rather he challenges our centre. Where is your heart? What is your passion?

Aims or goals focussed solely on material things are dead ends. They can even be against God's law. We need material things; they are God's gifts and are to be enjoyed. They become dead ends if they are all we live for, or if their acquisition damages our relations with God, others or creation. If Christ lives in us, as our guiding spirit then we have real life.

In the Gospel Jesus has been complaining about the lack of conversion in the hearts of his people. To his people much had been given in terms of the understanding of

the love of God and God's expectation of his people. Jesus breaks off his lament to turn to God in prayer.

He begins, "I give you thanks, Father, Lord of heaven and earth."

Jesus thanks God that his disciples, the "infants" in things religious, are beginning to grasp the nature of God's vision, while the learned, who profess to be educated in the tradition, are caught in the trappings, the externals.

Matthew emphasises the role of Jesus, who one with God reveals God to us in a new and definitive way. The faithful obedience of the Son is the model for the obedient, steadfast disciple.

Jesus now addresses those who are not yet disciples. Come to me if you feel the weight of religious burdens. I will restore you, bring you peace. The easy yoke, which Jesus offers is to be in partnership with him. Any demands that Jesus makes will be shared. His assurance comes from his experience in the ordinary experiences of life.

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