



Fourteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time
† Sunday 9th July 2017

In England and Wales
Cycle of Prayer: For Seafarers
Keynote: God comes to bring peace

Prophet Zechariah 9: 9–10

‘The Lord says this: ‘Rejoice heart and soul, daughter of Sion! Shout with gladness, daughter of Jerusalem! See now, your king comes to you; he is victorious and triumphant.’ Today talk of war and the weapons of war remind us of the horrifying nuclear blast or the terrifying noise of tank or helicopter gunship. In Zechariah’s day, it was charging horsemen and the chariots of war that the people most feared. The prophet speaks of God, as the warrior king fighting alongside his people. *‘He will banish chariots from Ephraim and horses from Jerusalem, the bow of war will be banished.’* But for Zechariah, there is a marked difference about this God King who is to come as saviour, *‘See now your king comes to you; he is victorious, he is triumphant, humble and riding on a donkey... he will proclaim peace for the nations... to the ends of the earth.’* Christians are reminded of the gospel narratives of the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem riding on a young colt, and coming in peace.

Responsorial Psalm 144 [145] – A song in praise of God’s fidelity

Letter of Paul to the Romans 8: 9, 11–13

The writings of the Apostle Paul are not always the easiest reading. What Paul has to say here is, however, very fundamental and important. For continuing with his thoughts about justification, about the meaning of Christian baptism, Paul informs us that *‘the Spirit of God has made his home in you. In fact,’* he says, *‘unless you possessed the Spirit of Christ you would not belong to him. And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, then he who raised Jesus from the dead will give life to your own mortal bodies through his Spirit living in you.’* The ethical and moral consequences for us is that, *‘there is no necessity for us to obey our unspiritual selves...’*, for that would lead to death. Instead, Paul tells us, *‘But if by the Spirit you put an end to the misdeeds of the body, you will live.’*

Gospel according to Matthew 11: 25–30

First, we see an intimacy between Jesus and his Father in heaven, as Jesus says, *‘I bless you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, for hiding these things from the learned and the clever and revealing them to mere children... Everything has been entrusted to me by my Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father... and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.’* Secondly, to those who are fearful, burdened or labouring, Jesus says, *‘Come to me all who labour and are overburdened, and I will give you rest... for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.’* In the coming weeks we shall learn more about the characteristics of the Kingdom of God as Jesus reveals it to his disciples. As in the first reading we learned of the saviour warrior king who would come in great majesty but in peace, so in this passage, we learn something about our Lord and Master and his relationships, and the true nature of the kingdom of God.