

## Fourteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time 2020

My beloved brothers and sisters, if you are like me, you are very frustrated with the lack of a dynamic leadership in our time, both in this nation and in the world! There are no statesmen, or women! There are basically two kinds of leaders: those who use other people to get power, wealth and privilege, and those who sacrifice themselves for the good and welfare of others. Jesus was the second form of leaders, who gave his very self for our welfare, knowing from all eternity, that we would torture and murder Him; nonetheless, He gave Himself constantly in infinite meekness, even making Himself the Bread of Life!

The first reading expresses this perfectly: it is a prophecy describing the attributes of the promised messiah, God's promised savior, who would come to rescue Israel and humanity from idolatry and subjection. The prophet uses a comparison between the promised messiah and the pagan kings who had conquered and ruled Israel for so long a time. The Messiah enters Jerusalem, not on a charging war horse, but on a donkey, an animal considered to be noble in ancient Israel, but one that was ridden by the judges of the law and the rabbis, by those who brought order and justice according to the law of God. The prophet goes on to describe the Messiah as bringing an end to the instruments of subjection, war and injustice.

In the gospel for today, Jesus Himself describes His rule and His role: He invites the crowds to come to Him, to follow Him, and to obey Him, so that He can bring them into His Rest! His rest is the Shalom, the peace that only God can bring when we live in accord with God's reign in our lives! Jesus will never force us to bear heavy burdens just for His gratification or to lord it over us like many power-hungry rulers do today; rather, Jesus invites us to walk by His side as companion on His journey, harnessed to the same yoke!

He does not tell us nor promise us a life that is easy or a life that is not filled with struggles and difficulties; rather, that He is our companion on the way, and we are His. Just as a team of horses or oxen has a united purpose and goal, we are united to the purpose and goal of Christ, which is the salvation of our brothers and sisters in the world, the destruction of the rule of the evil one in our own

lives, and the lives of all around us. Bearing the yoke, the cross of Christ with Him is a struggle, and a burden but I do not bear it alone, I bear it with Him, and if I bear the burden with Him, I also bear His Glory with Him. That is what it means to be united with Christ. I love the prayer: The Breast Plate of St. Patrick:

**I** bind unto myself today  
The strong Name of the Trinity,  
By invocation of the same,  
The Three in One and One in Three.

**I** bind this day to me forever.  
By power of faith, Christ's incarnation;  
His baptism in the Jordan river;  
His death on Cross for my salvation;  
His bursting from the spiced tomb;  
His riding up the heavenly way;  
His coming at the day of doom;\*  
I bind unto myself today.

**I** bind unto myself today  
The power of God to hold and lead,  
His eye to watch, His might to stay,  
His ear to hearken to my need.  
The wisdom of my God to teach,  
His hand to guide, His shield to ward,  
The word of God to give me speech,  
His heavenly host to be my guard.

**A**gainst the demon snares of sin,  
The vice that gives temptation force,  
The natural lusts that war within,  
The hostile men that mar my course;  
Or few or many, far or nigh,  
In every place and in all hours,  
Against their fierce hostility,  
I bind to me these holy powers.

**A**gainst all Satan's spells and wiles,  
    Against false words of heresy,  
    Against the knowledge that defiles,  
        Against the heart's idolatry,  
        Against the wizard's evil craft,  
Against the death wound and the burning,  
The choking wave and the poisoned shaft,  
    Protect me, Christ, till Thy returning.

**C**hrist be with me, Christ within me,  
Christ behind me, Christ before me,  
Christ beside me, Christ to win me,  
    Christ to comfort and restore me.  
Christ beneath me, Christ above me,  
    Christ in quiet, Christ in danger,  
    Christ in hearts of all that love me,  
Christ in mouth of friend and stranger.

**I** bind unto myself the Name,  
The strong Name of the Trinity;  
    By invocation of the same.  
The Three in One, and One in Three,  
    Of Whom all nature hath creation,  
        Eternal Father, Spirit, Word:  
        Praise to the Lord of my salvation,  
        Salvation is of Christ the Lord.