

Rejoice, God awaits our call and comes to us



NEXT SUNDAY

MSGR. OWEN F. CAMPION

BACKGROUND. This weekend, the first biblical reading is from the Book of Zechariah.

Zechariah was of the priestly caste and was born in Babylon. His birth occurred during the time when many Jews were in forced exile in the Babylonian capital. He went to the Holy Land with his grandfather when the exile was ended. It might be assumed that he was either a youth or a young adult when he made this trip, as few grandparents at the time lived long enough to see their grandchildren reach middle age.

Finally in the Holy Land, he

devoted himself to the care and study of the Scriptures. Obviously, he saw himself, and was regarded, as a prophet.

He met a violent death, being murdered apparently in the temple precincts themselves.

Whatever his age, unless he was an infant too young to notice, and this is unlikely, he would have seen, and probably was part of, the enthusiasm of the people as they quit the despised Babylon and began their journey home.

The reading for this weekend captures this great joy and enthusiasm. All wrongs were to be righted. To lead the people into a new day of peace and prosperity, God will send a messiah who will enter the holy city of Jerusalem with great humility, seated on an ass.

This image was to be a part of the event of Palm Sunday, actually to occur many centuries later when Jesus entered Jerusalem.

St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans provides the second reading. In this selection, Paul repeats the theme so often given in his writings. Christians not only follow Christ, or join Christ in their own walks

through life, but the Lord becomes part of them. They become part of Jesus. Christian discipleship forges this strong a bond.

The last reading is from St. Matthew's Gospel. Jesus continually encountered persons very well educated in the Scriptures. Often, they opposed the Lord. Yet, in the minds of many at the time, they were the wisest and most learned in the society.

Understandably, Jesus had to insist that the wisest in popular consensus were not the wisest after all. By contrast, the Lord says that humble and innocent children often can better see the most profound of truths.

However, Jesus does not leave people to drown in the sea of their own pride and ignorance. Rather, the Lord calls them. He reaches to them. Confronting all the obstacles of life is not easy, but it is a burden lightened by the fact that support comes from Jesus, the Son of God.

Reflection

The Gospel this weekend presents facts indispensable

to Christian doctrine and to achieving Christian holiness. None of us, in the last analysis, is very insightful. Original Sin has robbed us of our good vision. We all look at a world that is out of focus, distorted and unclear. We are myopic. We think only of ourselves. In our realization, even though not identified, of our inadequacy, we exaggerate ourselves. We make ourselves greater than we are.

So, we deceive ourselves. We trick ourselves into thinking that we can find the way on our own. We cannot. Only God can show the way.

Mercifully, happily for us, God shows us the way in

Jesus. Jesus not only leads us, but also gives us divine life itself. As true believers, we live in Jesus, and the Lord lives in us.

The key to attaining this relationship is our humility, our trust in God.

We do not have to yearn for God without relief. God awaits our call. He loves us with an everlasting, perfect love. He will come to us. Thus, with Zechariah, we can rejoice that the Lord comes to us.

Msgr. Owen Campion, former editor of the Tennessee Register, is associate publisher of Our Sunday Visitor. ☩

*Sunday, July 6, 2008
Fourteenth Sunday
in Ordinary Time*

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

Growing in faith while saving gas



EXTRA!

FATHER PETER J. DALY CNS

With gas at \$4 per gallon, I'm not driving anywhere this summer. Not if I can help it. Maybe that is a good thing.

Just a roundtrip to the beach (300 miles) costs more than \$50 in gas. Add in the tolls and other expenses and a day at the beach is no "day at the beach."

I went online to see what the "carbon footprint" of my 9-year-old Ford Taurus looks like. The government has a Web site to help figure this out: www.fueleconomy.gov.

I am not Bigfoot, but I'm not good. My car averages 19 miles to the gallon. I use 18 barrels of oil per year, 11 of them from foreign sources. I give some of my money to tyrants.

My car puts 9.6 tons of CO2 gas into the air each year.

At \$4 per gallon, I spend about \$3,100 per year for gas. That is 10 percent of my cash income. My parishioners also have been hit hard by gas prices.

My parish is "ex-urbia." We were formerly rural, but now constitute the outlying suburbs. People here drive 100 miles roundtrip to work.

We have almost no public transit. The few commuter

buses are full. Telecommuting is more common. There is a telecommuting center for federal employees in a nearby shopping center.

Car pools are gaining in popularity in my parish. A few people park in our lots on weekdays, which is fine with me. I'm glad we can support their efforts to conserve.

What people drive is changing. I notice fewer SUVs and more compact cars in our parking lots.

People are combining trips to town.

Next fall our adult education program will take advantage of parishioners' desire to drive less. We will have classes for adults at the same time as our high school religious education. Parents who drop off their teens at class can stay here instead of driving home. They can save gas and grow in their faith. Not a bad bargain. We also have adoration at that hour.

So far our church collection basket has not suffered. People feel less well off, however. Housing prices in our area have started to fall. People don't want to live so far from work.

Utility prices have skyrocketed for everyone. Utilities account for about 10 percent of our parish budget.

We also spend a lot more parish money on gas for our lawn mowers, snow blowers,

weed whackers and the parish pickup truck and snow plow.

There is one positive result of the high energy prices: They remind us to be better stewards of God's earth.

Last year we set up a "green" committee. Following their recommendations we did an energy audit of all our buildings. We installed more than 100 energy-saving light bulbs. We changed our thermostats. We are planning on better insulation and window replacements to make our buildings more efficient.

We also stopped purchasing Styrofoam products. We now use only biodegradable paper products.

The parish has ordered 2,000 reusable nylon grocery bags to reduce our use of petroleum-based plastic bags that the grocery stores give out. We fertilize our lawns less often, which saves energy and our nearby wetlands.

We are contemplating banning plastic bottles and installing a drinking fountain on our athletic field. We recycle everything. Our maintenance men combine trips to the landfill to save on gas.

Not everybody is onboard with this newfound green consciousness. But higher gas prices are making us all environmentalists.

That is a good thing. Everything has God's grace in it. Even rising gas prices. ☩



SAINTS FOR TODAY

Blessed Pope Benedict XI

Born into an Italian working-class family, Niccolo Boccasini was unanimously elected as Pope Benedict XI in October, 1303. He entered the Dominicans at the age of 14 and served as Master General of the Order. Later, he was named as Cardinal-Bishop of Ostia, Italy, and a papal legate. He reign as pope was for less than a year and it is believed that he was poisoned by followers of one of his enemies. His sermons and commentaries on the Gospel of Matthew, the Psalms, the Book of Job and Revelations were widely read. (Since Pope Benedict X is now considered an antipope, Popes Benedict XI - XVI are officially recognized as Benedict X-XV.) Benedict XI (X) was beatified in 1736 and we remember him on July 7.

June 28 - Teresa Maria, the oldest child of a grocer (Giulio) and an elementary school teacher (Maria Antonia), was born in 1881 in Verona, Italy. When she made her First Communion at the age of 10 she also made a "private vow of chastity." Although she would have preferred to join earlier, she entered the Institute of the Sisters of Mercy at the age of 17. After teaching school for 20 years she entered the Cistercian monastery, taking the name Maria Pia. It was soon determined that she was not called to life in a cloister and she returned to teaching. In 1930 she founded the Institute of Sisters of the Holy Face, which she served as Superior General until her death in 1951. She opened 14 houses for her sisters in Italy before dying in Rome from a heart attack.

July 1 - To fulfill his father's wishes, Nazju Falzon earned his law degree but spent the rest of his life following his own desire, to evangelize. He received Minor Orders at the age of 15 but never felt worthy to be ordained and so he concentrated his work on the many British servicemen who were stationed on the island of Malta. He gained the trust of even the "roughest" of men and "many left their valuables with him as they shipped out, because they knew he would get them to their families if anything happened to them." It is said that he converted "hundreds." He was beatified in 2001. ☩

- CHERYL WACHTEL

June 27 - St. Cyril of Alexandria, St. Emma

July 5 - St. Anthony Zaccaria, St. Athanasius

June 28 - St. Irenaeus, St. Almus

July 6 - St. Maria Goretti, St. Modwenna, St. Merryn

June 29 - Sts Peter and Paul, Sts. Salome and Judith

July 7 - Blessed Emmanuel Ruiz and Companions, St. Pantaenus, St. Ameplius

June 30 - First Martyrs of the Church of Rome, St. Martial, St. Airick

July 8 - St. Gregory Grassi and Companions, St. Adrian III, St. Kilian

July 1 - Blessed Junipero Serra, St. Gall

July 2 - St. Oliver Plunkett, St. Bernardino Realino, St. Aceses

July 9 - St. Augustine Zhao Rong and Companions, St. Godfrey Blessed Adrian Fortescue

July 3 - St. Thomas the Apostle, St. Anatolius

July 10 - St. Veronica Giuliani, Sts. Perpetua and Felicity, St. Alexander

July 4 - St. Elizabeth of Portugal, St. Ulric