

Reflection for the 14th Sunday of Ordinary Time

Zion, shout for joy, O daughter Jerusalem! See, your king shall come to you; a just savior is he, meek, and riding on a colt, the foal of an ass. He shall banish the chariot from Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem; the warrior's bow shall be banished, and he shall proclaim peace to the nations. Zechariah 9:9-10

This Sunday our first reading is taken from the book of the Prophet Zechariah. Many might hear this reading and think of the Gospel reading Matthew 21: 1-11 that is read as part of the blessing of the palms on Palm Sunday. This reading from the Gospel of Matthew contains a quote from the Prophet Zechariah. Today we are not celebrating Palm Sunday rather we are celebrating the 14th Sunday of Ordinary time, and this is one of two Sundays that the First Reading of the Mass is taken from the Book of the Prophet Zechariah.

This first reading at Mass today sets the tone for all the readings this Sunday and the Mass as a whole. The Book of the Prophet Zechariah is written after the return from exile from Babylon in 530 BC. Most scholars would seem to agree that this book was written sometime between the years 520 to 400 BC. Also, today many scholars would seem to agree that chapters 1-8 can be dated to being written between the years 520-518 BC, and chapters 9-14 are believed to be written in the next century. It is common to look at the Book of Zechariah has being created in two parts, Zechariah 1 consisting of chapters 1-8, and Zechariah 2 consisting of chapters 9-14.

Today, most modern scholars tend to see the Book of Zechariah was being written by two different people. Zechariah 1 was written in the 5th Century, and starts with a preface that covers chapters 1-6 and recalls the nation's history. This is done for the purpose of presenting a warning to the present generation. Next follows eight visions, which after the warning are meant to provide hope to the current generation, assuring them of God's presence and blessings in their daily lives. In Zechariah 2 the reader is presented with two oracles that are messianic in their very nature. The 1st oracle, which is verses 9-11 (our 1st reading this Sunday) gives a description of God's providential love for his people and includes the promise of the coming of the Messiah. In the 2nd oracle which is found in verses 12-14, the glories that await the people of Israel is explained, including the final conflict and the triumph of God's Kingdom.

The message that we find in all our readings this Sunday is the difference that the Messiah makes in this world, that with His coming all is changed, nothing is ever again the same. This is a message that is not new and has been handed down from one generation to the next since the fall of mankind from the Garden of Eden. God the Father and Creator of the world has promised the coming of the Messiah as the redeemer of humanity and we have waited for that day until the promise was fulfilled with the birth of the Christ child in Bethlehem. With the coming of Christ, the promise of eternal salvation has dawned on humanity.