

HOMILY for 14th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME – Year A

This Sunday's Gospel tells us why we need to come to Jesus with our life burden & daily difficulties. That reminds me of this cute story that I'd like to share with you.

A group of women got together to share their family issues & show support for one another. One lady began to speak, "My husband was made president of his company &, of course, it affected our lives. There are a lot of pressures. It made him very nervous. He became a nail biter. Now this doesn't sound like much, but it's my nails that he's biting!"

Anyway, part of being an adult is having to deal with pressure & life burden on a regular basis. As a child, we don't have much life burden other than homework & friendships. The main pressure that young people have these days is peer pressure. They want to fit in & gladly do anything to achieve it. As an adult, we're worried about bigger things such as food, drink, shelter, daily basic necessities, jobs, social status, health, insurances, relationships, & so on. We're under pressure to take care of our loved ones or raise up good & productive members amidst our crazy world. Every day we have to face all sorts of problems & issues – physically, mentally, spiritually, & socially. So, where do we go to fix those problems? How can we get rid of those issues?

Some people deal with their problems by drinking while others handle them by smoking or eating. Some rely on pleasure & entertainment to help them through troubled time while others abuse various substances to get them to forget their problems. Of course the easiest way most people use to confront their troubles is to take one pill after another. That's how people have counted on when facing with troubles & difficulties in their lives. Unfortunately those solutions are unreliable & often misleading. They cause people to be confused & addicted. When people take up drinking, eating, pleasure, or substance abuse to deal with their troubles & difficulties, they usually don't fix the current problems. Worst yet, they get addicted to other ones. They get hooked on alcohol, food, pleasure, & various substances. The new addictions often hide the old problems or make them forget about those for a while. But, at the end of the day, all of their problems are still there. Their problems & nightmares have not gone away. They're still with them; & they don't know what to do.

That state of mind is what has caused some people to feel depressed & overwhelmed. They're anxious & worried about their daily challenges. They don't know how to handle their problems or where to get help. Over time their problems get worse & they think they are facing a dead end. The only way out of their mess is to take their own lives or commit suicide. That's why the number of suicide cases is skyrocketing in our country & around the world. At least a couple of thousand suicides happen every minute in our country according to a reputable social research. Suicide happens because people are depressed & they don't know where to do with their problems. They don't know whom to trust & ask for help. They come to people like Dr. Kervokian for solution.

For us children of God, we come to the Lord in good time & in bad. In case you still don't know where to go to or whom to call in times of trouble, Jesus wants to remind us with this message in today's Gospel, "...Come to me all who are weary & find life burdensome; & I will refresh you. Take my yoke upon your shoulders & learn from me. For I am gentle & humble of heart. Your soul will find rest. For my yoke is easy & my burden light." It might not make sense for us with heavy burden to put on a yoke on our shoulders. If anything, we should have loads taken off us. But by putting on the yoke of Jesus, He'll help us carry our life burden. He'll give us a helping hand & lift us up from our daily troubles. That's why we Christians come to the Lord in prayer & Sacraments to find help & guidance for our life problems. We count on Jesus to be our hope & bring meaning to our life. Jesus is our special medicine & source of healing.

Evidently the people of God had to face lots of troubles & enemies; & some even conquered them & took them to be their slaves. They desperately needed a good leader to guide & defend them. They called on the Lord & prayed for that leader over many years. Their prayer was finally answered; &

today's First Reading shares with us that great news & some of his great qualities as following, "...Rejoice heartily, O Daughter Zion! ...See, your king shall come to you; a just savior is he, meek & riding on an ass... He shall banish the chariot from Ephraim, & the horse from Jerusalem; the warrior's bow shall be banished, & he shall proclaim peace to the nations." A leader with those wonderful qualities would sure know how to guide the people of God & protect them. We Christians can see those qualities in Jesus. That's why we pick him to be the one & only leader. That's why we trust Him with our lives & call on Him in times of trouble.

My dear brothers & sisters, as our country celebrates her birthday this weekend with the July 4th ceremonies & festivities, we first give thanks to God for all the blessings that the United States of America has brought us. In spite of her failures & shortcomings, America continues to be the best place on earth for people to live, the most desirable destination for wanderers to end up, & the greatest land to provide wonderful opportunities for its citizens to prosper. I pray that our country will set her heart on greater values or virtues & always inspire her citizens to search for values or virtues that will bring true peace & happiness. I hope that our nation will embrace goodness or the light & resist evil or darkness in all its forms. For us Christians in this time of uncertainty & anxiety, we should come to the Lord regularly in prayer & Sacraments & ask Him to guide us & help us. We should pick Jesus over other leaders & idols to be our Lord & Savior. Why? For He won't disappoint us!