

The 14th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A.
The Readings: Zechariah 9:9-10; Romans 8:9, 11-13; Matthew 11:25-30.

By Fr. Augustine Agwulonu, OP

Yes, Father, such has been your gracious Will

The accomplishment of God's gracious will gladdens the heart. We can recognize the veracity of this statement as we observe how our Lord bursts into the praise of his heavenly Father and Lord of the earth. The reason for this exclamation of praise is that God has revealed "these things" to "the little ones." What is it that God hides "from the wise and the learned" reveals to "the little ones." Who belongs to each of these respective groups? To answer these questions, let us consider the context of this Sunday's Gospel. ***Yes, Father, such has been your gracious will.***

On today's Sunday, the Church presents the last passage of Matt 11 for our listening pleasure, study, and reflection. The context can be said to centre on John the Baptist and the Lord Jesus Christ in their missions as God's messengers. This servant of God, John the Baptist, declares Jesus, is the greatest "among those born of women." But the sad story is that the generation of John's time does not respond positively to his message. In fact, "they say 'He has a demon.'" The reason is because he lives an ascetic life (Matt 11:18). Within the same context, the same generation rejects Jesus. They call him "a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!" Their reason is that "the Son of man came eating and drinking (Matt 11:19)." Subsequently, in Matt 11:20-24, the Lord upbraids the unrepentant cities within the generation that neither respects John nor worships Jesus. Finally, there is the final pericope, Matt 11:25-30, which is the text of today's Gospel. This passage is the conclusion of Matthew chapter 11. It gives us the words of Jesus' testimony to God in heaven, which says: ***Yes, Father, such has been your gracious will.***

And it has positive messages to share with us, which should gladden our hearts. In other words, the Lord sees the light of truth shining forth despite the forces of darkness trying to blur the vision of God's glory in a generation that neither considers John the Baptist nor recognizes Jesus for who they are.

This Gospel reading directs our attention to the first reading from the prophet Zechariah. His prophetic oracle reminds us that we have the vocation to be joyful, to rejoice with the daughter of Zion, and to shout for joy with the daughter of Jerusalem. Yes, nothing can cut us off from the living stream of God's praises as the Lord Jesus demonstrates to us in the Gospel. He is our king who comes riding on a colt. He is the Lord of gladness. We have all the reasons in the world to praise God, to worship Jesus with songs of adoration, and inspired hymns. We belong to the positive generation that sings God's praises with the Blessed Mother of God, Mary most Holy. Thus, the Lord Jesus Christ declares: ***Yes, Father, such has been your gracious will.***

Furthermore, we are able to sing God's praises and rejoice because, according to the second reading from Romans, St. Paul teaches us that the spirit of the Risen Lord Jesus Christ dwells in us – we do well to believe this! It is the truth. And so, we are children of the resurrection. We possess the power of the resurrection. And this also inspires us and increases our desire to sing God's praises even louder and loudest. We unite our voice with that of Jesus Christ to confess saying: ***Yes, Father, such has been your gracious will.***

Finally, in today's Gospel, there are three important messages for our consideration and joyful perusal. The first is Jesus' exclamation of praise. We must join the Lord in his words of praise to our heavenly Father. The reason is that God's gracious will brings us blessing. It gives us peace. And it sustains us in hope. The second is Jesus' exclusive knowledge of God. Through our Lord Jesus Christ we know God. Jesus shares God's inner workings with us. And this knowledge makes us sharers in God's depth of goodness, inexhaustible love, deep compassion, and gentle dew of his mercy. The third point is Jesus' heartfelt invitation to us, urging us to come to him and find rest for our souls. Yes, are we not burdened with the load of pride, by the restlessness of our doubts, by our arrogant incredulity, by a world that has grown cold to the authentic Christian values? Are we not burdened by a world, which endeavours to brainwash humanity to accept that evil is good and good is evil? Today as never before, the gentle, loving, compassionate, and merciful voice of our Lord rings in our ears saying, come! Come to me in faith! Come, pay attention to me! Come, humble yourself before me! Come, learn from my meekness! Come, come, please, come!

Yes, Father, such has been your gracious will.