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Matthew 11:25-30

25 At that time Jesus exclaimed, 'I bless you, Father, Lord of heaven and of earth, for hiding these things from the learned and the clever and revealing them to mere children. 26 Yes, Father, for that is what it pleased you to do. 27 Everything has been entrusted to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, just as no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

28 'Come to me, all you who labour and are overburdened, and I will give you rest. 29 Shoulder my yoke and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 Yes, my yoke is easy and my burden light.'

Other readings: Zechariah 9:9-10 Psalm 144 (145) Romans 8:9,11-13

Our reading today is exclusively made up of the words of Jesus. The initial two verses are addressed to the Father, while in the remainder of the reading Jesus addresses his listeners. Both parts of the reading contain words of great beauty and great intimacy.

Jesus begins by praising the Father for allowing 'these things' to be known by those who, like children expectant of good things from loving parents, open their hearts and minds. In the previous passage in Matthew's gospel Jesus had condemned the refusal to repent of the lakeside towns. Despite the evidence of the mighty deeds and powerful preaching of Jesus their response was lukewarm.

Jesus rejoices in those whose hearts are open to receive and to learn. His next statement makes clear that he is the way to the Father. It is through knowing him that we come to know the Father. It is the Son alone who fully knows the Father and it is through the Son that those who are ready to receive and learn come to know the reality of God. These words may well remind us of some of the statements in John's gospel. 'It is the only Son, who is nearest the Father's heart, who has made God known.' (John 1:18)

No-one can really listen to the final words of Jesus without being moved at the compassion of God. As the reading from the prophet Zechariah illustrates, the Messiah comes not to dominate and control but humbly to offer new life and strength.

We continue to read from St Paul's Letter to the Romans. Paul speaks of the Spirit who gives us life. The same Spirit who was revealed in power at the resurrection of Jesus gives new life to us in baptism. We are free to accept and live that new life. We are free to receive the good news like 'mere children' or to reject it and thereby lose the greatest gift.

Do I allow the life of God, Father, Son and Spirit, into my mind and heart?

Do I welcome and trust in the loving care of Jesus?

We pray for those who are overburdened with the problems of life.

We pray for the courage to take up the yoke of Christ and follow him.