

## Homily For the XIV Sunday of the year / July 05, 2026

Zec 9:9-10; Rom 8:9, 11-13; Mt 11:25-30

We often think that freedom means having no obligations, no responsibilities, and no one telling us what to do. Yet today's readings remind us that every one of us carries a yoke. The real question is not whether we have one, but **which yoke we choose to carry**.

St. Paul speaks about two ways of living: according to the flesh or according to the Spirit. The "flesh" is not simply our body; it is that part of us that believes we must control everything, prove ourselves, and save ourselves. It tells us that our worth depends on our success, our achievements, or our ability to get everything right. That sounds very familiar today. We live in a world where many people feel they are never enough. We compare ourselves with carefully edited lives on social media. We measure our value by productivity, wealth, appearance, or popularity. We carry anxiety about our families, our health, our finances, the future of our world, and the uncertainty of tomorrow. Many are exhausted—not because they have stopped working, but because they never stop worrying.

Paul reminds us that this is not the life Christ wants for us. We cannot save ourselves by trying harder or by pretending we have everything under control. Salvation is God's gift. It is grace before it is achievement. We are loved before we succeed. The Holy Spirit dwells within us, not because we have earned God's love but because God freely chooses to share His life with us. This does not mean we stop trying to live holy lives. Rather, we stop trying to earn God's love and instead begin living from God's love. Obedience becomes a response to grace, not a way of purchasing it.

In the Gospel, Jesus thanks His Father because the deepest truths of God's Kingdom are revealed not to the proud but to the humble. Knowledge is a wonderful gift, but intelligence without humility can become a barrier to faith. Sometimes the people who recognize God most clearly are not the ones with the most degrees or the strongest arguments, but those with open hearts. Think of the quiet faith of so many ordinary people: grandparents who pray daily for their families; parents who make sacrifices that no one sees; carers who patiently look after the sick; neighbours who quietly help someone in need; volunteers who give their time without expecting recognition. These are people who understand something essential about God because they have learned to love.

Jesus then makes an astonishing claim: "No one knows the Father except the Son." In other words, if we want to know what God is like, we look at Jesus. We do not have to guess about God's heart. We see it in Christ's compassion, His mercy, His forgiveness, His patience with sinners, and His welcome of those who felt forgotten.

Then comes one of the most comforting invitations in all of Scripture: "*Come to me, all you who labour and are burdened, and I will give you rest.*" Those words speak just as powerfully today as they did two thousand years ago. Many of us arrive at church carrying invisible burdens. Some are grieving. Some are worried about their children or grandchildren. Some are struggling with illness, loneliness, broken relationships, or financial pressure. Others simply feel tired emotionally, spiritually, or mentally. Jesus does not promise that life will suddenly become easy. He does promise that we will never have to carry our burdens alone.

He says, "Take my yoke upon you." Notice that a yoke is made for two. Christ is not placing another weight on our shoulders. He is inviting us to walk beside Him. He carries the greater weight. Our strength alone is never enough, but His strength always is. That changes everything. Instead of carrying the burden of perfection, we carry the burden of trust. Instead of carrying fear, we carry hope. Instead of carrying guilt alone, we bring it to His mercy. Instead of carrying our crosses by ourselves, we discover that Christ has already placed Himself beside us.

This is why prayer is so important. Every time we pray, we are laying our burdens before the Lord. Every time we celebrate the Eucharist, we bring our worries to the altar along with the bread and wine. Every time we celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation, we leave behind burdens that have weighed on our hearts for years. God never intended us to carry them forever.

Perhaps the greatest burden today is not that we have too much to do, but that we give so much energy to things that cannot truly satisfy us. We spend enormous effort chasing success, approval, possessions, or control over situations that remain beyond our control. Jesus invites us to exchange those burdens for His own—the burden of love. Love can be costly, but it never empties us of hope. Love always leads to life. As we leave this Mass, perhaps each of us can ask ourselves one simple question:

**What burden am I still trying to carry by myself?**

Whatever it is, Christ says again today, "Come to me." He does not ask us to pretend we are strong. He asks us to trust Him enough to let Him carry what we cannot. May we leave today yoked not to fear, pride, or anxiety, but to Christ Himself, who walks beside us, strengthens us with His Spirit, and leads us into the peace that only He can give.