

Homily

14th Sunday OT - A

Rev. Peter G. Jankowski

July 04-05, 2026

Zec 9: 9-10

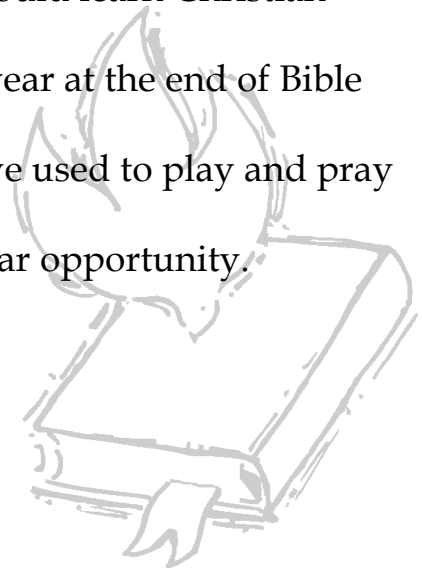
Ps 145: 1-2, 8-9, 10-11, 13-14

Rom 8: 9, 11-13

Mt 11: 25-30

*Welcome to our Bible school.
We're so glad you are here.
And you hope to with us stay.
God's own word to hear.
Learn about Jesus' love.
How from heaven he came.
Came to see us. Live to free us.
Praise his holy name.*

I remember that song from when I was ten years old. Each year for a period of my childhood, I went to visit my uncle Mario Cosenza with his kids. Ken and Karen. Each year, we spent a week together at Vacation Bible School (VBS). During Bible School, we were making all kinds of wonderful little toys and games. We would learn Christian songs like the one I just shared with you. Each year at the end of Bible School, we gathered for a big assembly, when we used to play and pray with our parents. It was an absolutely spectacular opportunity.



To be with my uncle, my cousins and all my friends and family in Palos Hills each year was just really a good experience for me. When I arrived at the Bordertown Parishes, I realized there was not a whole lot of Catholic activities going on for the kids of our community. We tried to figure out a way to do things with the kids, to give them a social time and prayer time.

As a way of accomplishing this, we are going to host our “Birthday Baseball with Fr. Pete” outing on August 13th. The Knights of Columbus were kind enough to pay for a rental bus for this outing, as we will have all kinds of opportunities to spend time together. I purchased fifty tickets for the game; I think we are charging \$10 for the ticket and the bus ride (altar servers get to go for free).

In addition, two of our young families (the Voleks and Meyers) wanted to get their kids invested in the parish. So Bobbi Volek and Madison Meyer asked me, “Is it possible that we could host Vacation Bible School here at St. Patrick’s?” Of course I said yes! So, from July 20-24 we are hosting VBS at St. Patrick’s at the same time we celebrate the St. Anne Novena in both churches.

So while we are praying the St. Anne Novena at night, we will be hosting Vacation Bible School over at the St. Patrick's gym. Whatever we can do to get the kids to come, this is the goal for both parishes we serve. The methodology here is to do whatever we can to get our kids invested in the life of the Church, to have our kids realize that they are special and they are loved.

So often, this is what our Hispanic community has been doing at our parishes with all kinds of different activities for the children that we have supported. The kids are the future of our Church; our kids represent the type of youthful innocence that our Lord tells us to embrace if we are to pass from earth to heaven. Two young couples at our parish are trying to make this possibility a reality. Now we have an opportunity. Two young couples at one of our parishes are doing what they can to bring kids together to have some fun in the name of the Lord. That is what we are supposed to do.

The gospel reading today focuses on us trying to embrace a childlike faith but we cannot do that unless we interact with kids and get the kids involved within the parish life because, more than anything, the kids of

our parishes possess the kind of faith that all of us need to embrace if we want to get to the Kingdom of Heaven. The Christian goal of our lives is for us to be able to play in the sandbox with everyone, no matter who they are... and that is the key, the key is to open our hearts.

In this faith, our challenge is to be welcoming, to all, to have that innocence for all. We also realize that when we get older, we get kind of set in our ways and we are kind of teaching our kids the “adult” ways of life. When we act in these “adult” ways, the kids in life are being conditioned to follow the “adult” example and often are just repeating what the adults are modeling for them.

Today, we are obligated to learn from our kids, see the innocence within our kids and tell them that they are loved, they are special and they are most welcome in God’s house. We are obligated to tell them out of love to join us during our parish life so we can learn from them and we can mold them to live like Christ through that innocence.

If you have a chance to contact the parish and get your kids involved with Vacation Bible School, if you want to help us out with the program or if there is anything you can do to help us, please do so. If you want to

participate in VBS or even if you want to pray for the kids, please just do so. Contact our office. The kids are our future. The kids are so special.

We are just so happy that young families have come forward to be invested in these kind of activities, to bring the youth into our parish and to build these communities up.

Thank you Madison Meyer. Thank you Bobbi Volek. Thank you Kyle Volek. Thank you Joe Meyer. Thank all of our families who are bringing their youth to our church. I was thinking at St. Anne's every time I walk past the front pew of the church, a hoard of young kids from the same family line up to give me "high fives" down the aisle; we need to see that. We need the youth and their innocence and the joy of children in our community, to show us how to act and what the future of the Church has in store.

God bless all of you. God bless our parents who take care of our kids. God bless those with childlike innocence that we share with the people that we meet. This is our prayer.