

SUNDAY GOSPEL REFLECTION

Dear St. Joseph Parishioners and Visitors,

This weekend our nation marks **Independence Day**. We celebrate freedom — freedom won, freedom defended, freedom cherished. Flags fly, fireworks light the sky, and we remember that liberty is a gift bought at great cost.

The Gospel on this **14th Sunday** speaks a different kind of freedom. Jesus says: “Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you... for my yoke is easy and my burden light.” Matt 11:28-30

It sounds like a paradox. How does taking a yoke bring rest? How does surrender bring freedom?

The answer is in who Jesus is: “meek and humble of heart.” A yoke was a wooden beam that joined two oxen together. When Jesus says “take my yoke,” He’s saying, “Walk with Me. I’ll pull the weight with you.” The burden we carry alone crushes us. The burden we carry yoked to Christ becomes bearable, because He is meek. He doesn’t drive us. He walks with us.

Zechariah’s prophecy in the first reading gives us the picture: “Behold, your king comes to you... humble, riding on a donkey.” Zech 9:9. No war-horse. No army. No threat. A king whose power is gentleness. That’s the kind of freedom Christ brings. Not freedom to do whatever we want, but freedom from what weighs us down — fear, resentment, pride, the need to control everything.

St. Paul reminds us in Romans that we are no longer slaves to fear and sin. The Spirit of God dwells in us. Rom 8:9. That’s real independence. Political freedom protects our rights. Spiritual freedom heals our hearts.

So, as we celebrate July 4th, let’s thank God for the gift of our country and for the men and women who protect it. And let’s also bring our personal burdens to Jesus. The worry you can’t sleep off. The relationship that’s strained. The habit you can’t break. Lay it down. His yoke is easy because He carries it with you.

True freedom begins when we stop running from God and start walking with Him. This week, take one burden to prayer each day and say, “Jesus, I give this to You. Teach me your meekness.” You may be surprised how light it feels when you’re not carrying it alone.



★ God bless ★
AMERICA

and God bless each of us as we learn the freedom of Christ.

Fr. Rafal Ligenza,
Pastor