

14th Sunday in Ordinary Time - July 5th, 2026

Happy Fourth of July!

As we celebrate the independence of our nation, we thank God for the gift of freedom, for those who built this country, and for all who continue to protect it. We pray that our nation may always be guided by God's truth, justice, peace, and respect for every human person.

Freedom is a beautiful gift. But today the Word of God reminds us that there is something even deeper than political freedom. A nation may be free, and still a person can be burdened. We may live in a free country and yet carry heavy loads in our hearts—worries, stress, family struggles, sickness, loneliness, regrets, and uncertainty about the future.

Many people today are simply tired. We hear it all the time: "I'm exhausted... I'm stressed... I'm drained... I can't handle one more thing." Maybe some of us feel that way too. Life moves fast. There is always something to do, something to fix, somewhere to go, someone to care for. And little by little, the heart becomes heavy.

That is why today's Gospel is such good news. Jesus says:

"Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest."

What a beautiful invitation. Jesus does not say, "Come to me only when you are strong." He does not say, "Come to me only when you have solved all your problems." He simply says, "Come to me." Come as you are. Come with your tired mind, your anxious heart, your family worries, your physical pain. Bring everything to me, and I will give you rest.

In a way, those words remind us of the inscription on the Statue of Liberty: "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free." Those words speak of a nation opening its doors to the weary. But in the Gospel, Jesus goes even deeper. He opens not just a country, but His own heart. He says to every tired soul: "Come to me."

And in today's Gospel, Jesus gives us three beautiful invitations.

The first is: "Come to me."

Jesus invites us to come to Him every day—not only when life is falling apart, but every day. Do not carry life alone. Bring your burdens to the Lord. Bring them to prayer. Bring them to Mass. Bring them to Jesus in the quiet of your heart. But when we bring our burdens to Christ, something changes. The burden may not disappear immediately, but we are no longer carrying it alone.

The second invitation is: "Take my yoke upon you."

A yoke joins two animals together so they can carry a load together. When Jesus says, “Take my yoke,” He is saying, “Walk with me. Stay close to me. Let me help you carry life.”

Christianity does not mean that we have no burden. It means that we do not carry the burden alone. When we are yoked to Jesus, He takes the heavier side of the cross. He gives strength, patience, and peace.

The third invitation is: “Learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart.”

This connects beautifully with the first reading from Zechariah. The prophet speaks of a king who comes not on a war horse, not with power and violence, but humble and gentle, riding on a donkey. That king is Jesus. He is not the king who frightens us. He is a king who comes close to us. He rules not by force, but by love. He teaches us that true greatness is found in humility, gentleness, and trust in God.

Then St. Paul in the second reading reminds us that we are called to live not according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. In other words, we are not meant to be slaves to fear, anger, selfishness, or despair. Through the Spirit of God living in us, we are called to a deeper freedom—the freedom to love, the freedom to forgive, the freedom to hope, and the freedom to live as children of God.

So, on this Independence Day weekend, the Scriptures invite us to ask an important question:

We celebrate freedom as a nation—but are we free in our hearts?

Free from bitterness? Free from constant worry? Free from the need to control everything?
Free to trust God?

True freedom is not simply doing what I want. True freedom is having a heart that belongs to God. True freedom is being able to say, “Lord, I place my life in your hands. Walk with me. Teach me. Carry me.”

St. Augustine once said, “Our hearts are restless until they rest in You.” That is the message of today’s Gospel. We all look for rest, peace, and freedom. And Jesus says: You will find it in me.

So today, as we thank God for the freedom of our country, let us also ask for the greater freedom that only Christ can give—the freedom from worry, the freedom from fear, the freedom from self-reliance, the freedom of a peaceful heart and a trusting soul.

May we hear again the loving voice of Jesus:

Come to me.

Take my yoke.

Learn from me.

And may this Eucharist give us that rest.

May the Lord bless our country, bless our families, and bless each one of us with the peace and freedom that only He can give. Amen.