

Father O'Connor Homily for 5 July 2026  
Fourteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time-A

Zechariah 9: 9-10  
Romans 8: 9, 11-13  
Matthew 11: 25-30

“Come to Me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest,” Jesus tells us in the Gospel today.

It is a very timely message for us to hear on this summer Independence Day weekend.

And it is an important message for us to take to heart and to live by.

Sooner or later many of us sense that the life we are living right now is not exactly the life we dreamed about.

We realize that life has its burdens, which Jesus refers to, three of which are prominent.

1) The first is the burden of daily irritations: standing in a long line, being forced to listen to elevator music while on hold for an hour, figuring out the endless conditions of Medicare and HMOs [Health Maintenance Organizations].

The daily irritations of life are a burden that we all bear.

2) The second burden includes more serious things like poverty, illness and loss.

The hurts that don't want to heal, the anger that won't go away, the success that eludes our grasp.

3) The third burden we carry is the deepest of all, although we tend to suppress it. It is the burden of our identity: Who am I?

Beneath the cosmetics, the role-playing, the pressures of fashion and belonging, who am I?

Throughout our lives we deal with this crucial question: Who am I really?

A) The first answer to that question that we come up with is: “I am what I do.” There is some truth to this.

When I do good things and have a little success, I feel good about myself.

But when I fail or grow old or sick or am down-sized, I can wonder: I am no longer able to do what I used to do, so who am I now?

B) Or we might say: “I am what other people say about me.” And sometimes this seems to be of top importance.

When people speak well of me, I can walk quite confidently.

But when someone starts saying negative things about me, I may be overcome with self-doubt.

I might even put on some false appearances, trying to please others to re-claim their approval.

C) Finally, we might say, “I am what I have.”

For example, “I am an American from a successful family, with a fine education, good health and lots of money and clothes and cars.”

But as soon as I lose any of these, I can quickly become insecure and feel like a nobody.

Still, we can put a lot of energy into maintaining beliefs like: A) “I am what I do.” B) “I am what others say about me.” C) “I am what I have.”

And when that is the case, our life is marked with repetitive ups and downs.

And most of our energy goes toward trying to stay above the line that we consider success, and we call this “surviving.”

Where do we look for direction? “Come to Me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest.”

We look to Jesus who knew who He was as He lived His life with all of its ups and downs.

At His baptism, His Father’s voice was heard: “This is My beloved Son with whom I am well pleased.”

People praised Jesus and people rejected Jesus.

People cried out, “Hosanna” and later cried out, “Crucify Him.”

No matter what, Jesus held on to this core truth of His identity: “I am My Father’s beloved Son. My Father says so.”

If there is anything that I want you to remember today, it is this: What God the Father said of Jesus, He also says of you: “You are my beloved son. You are my beloved daughter.”

This is your core identity. You must hear this truth not only in your head but also in your gut.

You are the beloved child of God before, during and after all the burdens of life.

Every time you are tempted to despair, to become bitter or jealous, every time you feel rejected, remind yourself:

“No matter what happens to me, I am always God’s beloved child.”

The line at the airport was long and the man at the counter was furious.

“I demand to be seated right now! I have a first-class ticket!”

The attendant behind the counter was patiently trying to explain the delay, but the passenger would have none of it.

Finally the angry man shouted, “Do you know who I am?”

Then the sharp-witted attendant picked up the microphone and announced:

“Attention, we have a gentleman here who doesn’t know who he is. If anyone can identify him, would you please come to the ticket counter?”

We can laugh at the angry man’s arrogance, but here is a person who has his identity all wrapped up in A) what he does, B) in what people say about him, and C) in what he has.

When these are threatened, he cries out in pain.

For what does he have left when his material identity is challenged or taken away?

What is left – if he only realized it – is that he is still a beloved child of God.

No matter what is going on in your life right now, I urge you to remember who you are: You are God’s beloved son. You are God’s beloved daughter.

And listen to what Jesus is saying to us right now: “Come to Me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest.”

We can take Him at His word because He means it.

And we can count upon Him to follow through.

“Come to Me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest.”

And remember, you are now and always a beloved child of God.