

THIRTEENTH SUNDAY OF ORDINARY TIME
5 July 2025

Fr. Jim Fredericks

Part One: the readings for the day
Part Two: reflections on the readings
Part Three: guidelines for *lectio divina*

PART ONE: READINGS FOR THE DAY
Lectionary: 100

Reading 1 Zechariah 9:9-10

Thus says the LORD:

Rejoice heartily, O daughter Zion,
shout for joy, O daughter Jerusalem!
See, your king shall come to you;
a just savior is he,
meek, and riding on an ass,
on a colt, the foal of an ass.
He shall banish the chariot from Ephraim,
and the horse from Jerusalem;
the warrior's bow shall be banished,
and he shall proclaim peace to the nations.
His dominion shall be from sea to sea,
and from the River to the ends of the earth.

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

R. I will praise your name for ever, my king and my God.

I will extol you, O my God and King,
and I will bless your name forever and ever.
Every day will I bless you,
and I will praise your name forever and ever.

R. I will praise your name for ever, my king and my God.

The LORD is gracious and merciful,
slow to anger and of great kindness.
The LORD is good to all
and compassionate toward all his works.

R. I will praise your name for ever, my king and my God.

Let all your works give you thanks, O LORD,
and let your faithful ones bless you.
Let them discourse of the glory of your kingdom
and speak of your might.

R. I will praise your name for ever, my king and my God.

The LORD is faithful in all his words
and holy in all his works.
The LORD lifts up all who are falling
and raises up all who are bowed down.

R. I will praise your name for ever, my king and my God.

Reading 2 Romans 8:9, 11-13

Brothers and sisters:

You are not in the flesh;
on the contrary, you are in the spirit,
if only the Spirit of God dwells in you.
Whoever does not have the Spirit of Christ
does not belong to him.
If the Spirit of the one who raised Jesus
from the dead dwells in you,
the one who raised Christ from the dead
will give life to your mortal bodies also,
through his Spirit that dwells in you.
Consequently, brothers and sisters,
we are not debtors to the flesh,
to live according to the flesh.
For if you live according to the flesh, you will die,
but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body,
you will live.

Alleluia Cf. Matthew 11:25

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

Blessed are you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth;
you have revealed to little ones
the mysteries of the kingdom.

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel Matthew 11:25-30

At that time Jesus exclaimed:

"I give praise to you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth,
for although you have hidden these things

from the wise and the learned
you have revealed them to little ones.
Yes, Father, such has been your gracious will.
All things have been handed over to me by my Father.
No one knows the Son except the Father,
and no one knows the Father except the Son
and anyone to whom the Son wishes to reveal him."

"Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened,
and I will give you rest.
Take my yoke upon you and learn from me,
for I am meek and humble of heart;
and you will find rest for yourselves.
For my yoke is easy, and my burden light."

PART TWO: REFLECTION ON THE READINGS

Note: this homily was given in Spanish.

Yesterday, the 4th of July, was the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence.

Today, I want to talk about immigrants. The United States is a land of immigrants. But this is a troubled time in our nation's history. Immigrants are being demonized. Disgraceful lies are being told about immigrants. And we – the Church – must stand in solidarity with immigrants. Our faith demands this of us.

And so, to commemorate the 4th of July, I want to remind you of how important immigrants are to us here in the United States.

What I want to say is simply this:

Immigrants bring with them a quality very important to a country like the United States.

They come here with hope.

And hope is what the United States needs at this troubled time in its history.

My people came to this country from Ireland because they were poor and, in fact, hungry. There was plenty of food in Ireland during the Great Famine. But the landowners gave the corn to their livestock, not the starving children.

Once my ancestors arrived here in the United States, they were met prejudice. They were demonized as lazy and irresponsible. Not a few Americans said that the Irish could never be “real Americans” because they were Catholics.

And yet the Irish persisted. My grandmother left school after completing the 3rd grade. She had to go to work to help support her family. And yet all of her children graduated from college.

I think of my grandmother when I speak with you about your children and their education and how much you have sacrificed to give your children a better future. I want you to be proud of your children. I want you to know that I am proud of them as well.

My ancestors persisted. And eventually they prospered.

This is not an easy time to be an immigrant in the United States. And so, as your priest, I want to remind you of a story from the Bible. It's from the Book of Exodus.

In Egypt, during the time of Moses, the Hebrew people called out to God in their suffering and the Lord remembered his promise to his people. He led the people out of the hopelessness of Egypt, through the Red Sea and into the desert. In the desert, the people were tested by hardship.

In their desperation, the people accused God, saying:

You led us all this way into the desert
only to abandon us.

But the Lord did not abandon his people. He ordered Moses to strike the stone with his staff and water flowed from the stone. The Lord did not abandon his people. He showed the people the *camino*.

This story in the Bible is about you. It is about immigrants. It is about setting out from Jalisco and Michoacan, Chiapas and even Chilangolandia and setting out into a desert in search of a future. This story is about losing hope in the desert and crying out to God. It's about how God hears the cry of the poor on their difficult sojourn and sustains them.

This story is about you. It's about the birth of hope in the heart of the immigrant. And I want you to share your story with the people of the United States. The people of the United States have lost their way in the desert and are in need of hope.

Let me teach you a prayer. It's a prayer of Saint Augustine. Augustine wandered in a desert as well, only his desert was an interior wilderness: the desert of his own soul.

On his long and difficult sojourn in the desert of his soul, Augustine cried out to God. Here is his prayer:

Oh Lord, do not abandon what You have begun in me,
but go on to perfect all that remains unfinished.

Augustine, lost in his interior desert in search of Christian faith, became a pilgrim through the grace of God. The wanderer became a pilgrim. And now today, God is calling immigrants to become pilgrims as well.

Do you see this? Do you see how this is your story? The Lord in his mercy is making you into sacraments of hope. This is why immigrants are so important to the United States today. The people of America need your hope.

Memorize Augustine's prayer and teach it to your children.

Do not abandon what You have begun in me,
but go on to perfect all that remains unfinished.

This is an immigrant's prayer and the United States is a country of immigrants.

Thank you for coming to this country. Thank you for persevering. And above all, thank you for being sacraments of hope.

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Ayer, 4 de julio, se cumplió el 250.º aniversario de la firma de la Declaración de Independencia.

Hoy quiero hablar sobre los inmigrantes. Los Estados Unidos es una tierra de inmigrantes. Pero vivimos tiempos difíciles en la historia de nuestra nación. Se está demonizando a los inmigrantes. Se dicen mentiras vergonzosas sobre ellos. Y nosotros – la Iglesia – debemos solidarizarnos con los inmigrantes. Nuestra fe nos lo exige.

Por eso, para conmemorar el 4 de julio, quiero recordarles lo importantes que son los inmigrantes para nosotros aquí en Estados Unidos.

Lo que quiero decir es simplemente esto:

Los inmigrantes traen consigo una cualidad muy importante para un país como Estados Unidos.

Llegan aquí con esperanza.

Y la esperanza es lo que los Estados Unidos necesita en este momento difícil de su historia.

Mi familia llegó a este país desde Irlanda porque eran pobres y, de hecho, pasaban hambre. Había abundancia de alimentos en Irlanda durante la Gran Hambruna. Sin embargo, los terratenientes daban el maíz a su ganado, no a los niños que morían de hambre.

Cuando mis antepasados llegaron a los Estados Unidos, se enfrentaron a prejuicios. Se les tachaba injustamente de perezosos e irresponsables. Muchos estadounidenses decían que los irlandeses nunca podrían ser "verdaderos estadounidenses" por ser católicos.

Y, sin embargo, los irlandeses perseveraron. Mi abuela dejó la escuela tras terminar el tercer grado. Tuvo que ponerse a trabajar para ayudar a mantener a su familia. Y, a pesar de ello, todos sus hijos se graduaron de la universidad.

Pienso en mi abuela cuando hablo con ustedes sobre sus hijos y su educación, y sobre cuánto se han sacrificado para brindarles un futuro mejor. Quiero que se sientan orgullosos de sus hijos. Quiero que sepan Uds. que yo también estoy orgulloso de ellos.

Mis antepasados perseveraron. Y, con el tiempo, prosperaron.

No son tiempos fáciles para ser inmigrante en los Estados Unidos. Por eso, como su sacerdote, quiero recordarles una historia de la Biblia. Se encuentra en el Libro del Éxodo.

En Egipto, durante la época de Moisés, el pueblo hebreo clamó a Dios en medio de sus sufrimientos, y el Señor recordó la promesa que había hecho a su pueblo. Él sacó al pueblo de la desesperanza de Egipto, lo guio a través del Mar Rojo y lo llevó al desierto. En el desierto, el pueblo fue puesto a prueba por las adversidades.

En su desesperación, el pueblo acusó a Dios diciendo:

Nos has traído hasta aquí, al desierto,
solo para abandonarnos.

Pero el Señor no abandonó a su pueblo. Ordenó a Moisés que golpeara la roca con su vara, y de ella brotó agua. El Señor no abandonó a su pueblo; les mostró el camino.

Esta historia de la Biblia trata sobre Uds. Trata sobre los inmigrantes. Trata sobre partir de Jalisco, Michoacán, Chiapas e incluso de la Ciudad de México para adentrarse en un desierto en busca de un futuro. Esta historia trata sobre perder la esperanza en el desierto y clamar a Dios. Trata sobre cómo Dios escucha el clamor de los pobres en su difícil travesía y los sostiene.

Esta historia trata sobre Uds. Trata sobre el nacimiento de la esperanza en el corazón del inmigrante. Y quiero que compartas tu historia con el pueblo de los Estados Unidos. El pueblo de los Estados Unidos ha perdido el rumbo en el desierto y necesita esperanza.

Permítenme enseñarles una oración. Es una oración de San Agustín. Agustín también vagó por un desierto, solo que el suyo era un desierto interior: el desierto de su propia alma.

En su larga y difícil travesía por el desierto de su alma, Agustín clamó a Dios. Aquí está su oración:

O Señor, no abandones lo que has comenzado en mí,
sino perfecciona todo lo que aún queda inconcluso.

Agustín, perdido en su desierto interior en busca de la fe cristiana, se convirtió en peregrino por la gracia de Dios. El errante se transformó en peregrino. Y hoy, Dios llama a los inmigrantes a convertirse también en peregrinos.

¿Lo ves? ¿Ves cómo esta es tu historia? El Señor, en su misericordia, les está convirtiendo en un sacramento de esperanza. Por eso los inmigrantes son tan importantes hoy para los Estados Unidos. El pueblo de Estados Unidos necesita su esperanza.

Memoriza la oración de Agustín y enséñasela a tus hijos.

No abandones lo que has comenzado en mí,
sino perfecciona todo lo que aún queda inconcluso.

Esta es la oración de un inmigrante, y los Estados Unidos es un país de inmigrantes.

Gracias por venir a este país. Gracias por perseverar. Y, sobre todo, gracias por ser sacramentos de esperanza.

PART THREE: INSTRUCTIONS FOR *LECTIO DIVINA*

I suggest that you use the readings and my reflections as an opportunity for practicing *lectio divina* ("divine reading"). This is an ancient spiritual practice that started with the great monks in the Syrian and Egyptian desert back in the early days of the Church. It is really quite simple.

Step one: calm your mind (my Buddhist friends describe the mind as "a mango-tree full of chattering monkeys"). I

find that paying attention to your breath for a few minutes is a practical and effective way to do this.

Step two: read the readings slowly and attentively. Savor the words as if you were tasting a great Pinot Noir. Don't rush. You are not looking for information or instructions. You are making friends with a sacred text which will bless you abundantly if you will only open your heart to it and let it speak to you. In *lectio divina*, we are not actually "reading" the Bible. Rather, we are "listening" to the Bible as the sacred words speak to us.

Step three: repeat step two.

Step four: read the homily on the readings.

Step five: Ask yourself a few questions:

- What particular words in the readings call out to me most forcefully?
- What is going on in my life such that these words call to me so forthrightly?
- How am I being asked to change, both interiorly and exteriorly?
- In light of this *lectio divina*, how am I being invited to be of service to the world today?