There is an odd kind of twist in today’s first reading. It starts with this: “REJOICE greatly! “See, your king shall come to you, victorious and triumphant.”

Sounds to me like we’re talking about somebody who’s going to clean house straighten things out, maybe the bad guys are going to get a good swift kick.

But, there there’s a strange twist. This king, it says, comes “humble, and riding on a donkey, on a colt of a donkey.”

Those are hardly words you’d be expecting to describe a king who is victorious and triumphant.

It doesn’t take much to figure out that humble doesn’t play well in America these days.

I checked out *humble* in a thesaurus:

- submissive, yielding, obedient, compliant, tame, timid, unresisting, quiet, mild, gentle, docile, lamblike, shy, unassuming, self-effacing.

For the most part those are attitudes at least many of us would just as soon steer clear of.

In America we have this kind of mentality that says “Nobody pushes us around … nobody tells us what to do … or how to get there.” We have this nothing-or-no-one-defeats-us kind of attitude.

It got instilled in most of us individually and collectively.
It works up to a point:
   Until you come up against something like pancreatic cancer
or an inoperable brain tumor
or the loss of a job you thought you’d have forever.

It happened to us collectively on Sept. 11, 2001
   and again to many of us in 2008.
Suddenly that can-do, nothing-will-defeat-us attitude
   gets shaken to the core.

When we’re faced with those kinds of realities –
   and really not one of us escapes those kinds of harsh realities –
When we are, I’d suggest that it would be helpful to sit very still for a while
   with Jesus’ words –
“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.”

What does it look like to be meek and humble of heart?

With Jesus it looks like what we hear in today’s Gospel.
We overhear him at prayer
   just after he’s faced some very discouraging stuff.

The Gospel has just noted that all those towns where Jesus had spent
   time curing and healing and teaching had totally missed it.
After the excitement of a few miracles,
   it was back to business as usual.
It was the BRICK WALL

At that moment of apparent failure, Jesus turns to prayer.
His prayer is a remembrance of who he is – the beloved Son of God.
He is in this relationship with God – and with all these other folks.

The key to true rest is this recognition of my utter inter-dependence.
That’s at the heart of meekness.
It’s the wisdom that knows that I can’t make it on my own.
But, when I’m willing to be yoked to Jesus,
   who is yoked to God and to every other creature on Earth,
then I find rest.

Randy Pausch, PhD at Carnegie Mellon
died of pancreatic cancer in 2008, 10 months after diagnosis.
He wrote *The Last Lecture*, and said:

“The brick walls are not there to keep us out, the brick walls are there to give us a chance to show how badly we want something.”