

Daily Homily
St. Bonaventure, Bishop
Memorial
Fifteenth Week in Ordinary Time: Thursday
15 July 2021
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The one word that steps out from all the words we hear in Scripture this morning, for me, is the word meek.

It's a descriptive word, a quality, a characteristic. However, I can't imagine anyone say of themselves, "I am meek." We never hear that. In anyone who has interviewed for a job, I have never heard anyone list that as one of their sterling qualities.

Jesus, however, does this. He uses the word "meek" to describe himself. I think that's why this word captures my attention today. It seems odd, out of place but also refreshing.

Meek doesn't mean weak or being a doormat. Jesus was neither of these things. After all it was meek Jesus who drove out the money changers from the temple. It was meek Jesus who told some of the Pharisees, "Woe to you..." and it was meek Jesus who called some of them fake – hypocrites. Jesus' meekness is a different kind of strength.

The Greek word for meek that is used here in this passage is *praos*, meaning tamed or trained. It reminds me of that classic children's story that was actually a favorite of Pope Benedict, The Little Prince. On one of his many adventures the Little Prince encounters a wild fox. The fox wants to be befriended, and he explains to the Little Prince how this should happen. The fox tells the prince, "Tame me." In a sense, "I will get used to you and you will get used to me." But the fox warns the prince that he will always be wild and the prince will always be a human, in the line of hunters and trappers, so they will always be on edge with each other. They will always have to maintain and hold back their wild side... that's what being tamed means. But it's worth doing for the sake of something greater, for the sake of love and friendship.

Jesus is meek. He has reserved strength in every situation, with his apostles, with those whom he encounters along the way... even on the cross. Jesus, crucified, is meek – he shows reserved strength. Jesus is meek with us. May we learn from his meekness as he tames us more fully and more deeply into his love and friendship.