

**Homily by Bishop Felipe J. Estévez for the Feast of St. Francis**  
**St. Francis High School, Gainesville**  
**September 30, 2013**

**Text - Mt. 11: 25-27**

Why has holy Mother Church chosen this gospel reading?

This Gospel has been called Matthew's most precious pearl. It is a marvelous moment when Jesus exults to the Eternal Father – with joy, intimacy and true praise!

“I give thanks to thee Father:” the purpose of life, is to praise, to give thanks – the most profound level we can be is to give thanks, to praise (Eph. 1, 3: to be praise of his glory).

Father and Lord: Father Abba, eternal child reveals God loves us when we relate to Him as a child (simplicity and innocence, candor) – unless you become a child you do not enter the kingdom...Kyrius – Creator, of heaven and earth – All powerful, the Almighty)...Francis loved Creation (patron of ecology), for in Creation he saw the traces of God in his beauty...

In dealing with the mystery of God saving us...God's ways are so mysterious because some are **hidden** to the wise and intelligent (the ones who know it all) but revealed to the infants (babes) to the little ones...

I know a family of three, twins and an older one. The older one is very spiritually gifted; the others are great in science, sports, etc. mentally deficient – God wanted to give him abundant faith, spiritual life. His mother is amazed that Danny is the most insightful in matters related to God (gifts). God is so free in his gifts, but he has a preferential love for the humble: the simple, blessed are the poor in spirit.

Holy Mother Church chose this pearl of the Gospel thinking of Francis, the *poverello* of Assisi. After Jesus, he is the most influential saint. In his prayer to the *Canticle to the Sun*: he echoes the words we heard from Jesus: I praise you Father. His goal was to embrace Lady Poverty. And he wanted to preach first of all by the witness of his life. Let us now listen to the words of Francis:

*Most high, all-powerful, all good Lord!*  
*All praise is yours, all glory, all honor and all blessings.*  
*To you alone, Most High, do they belong?*  
*No mortal lips are worthy to pronounce your name.*  
*All praise be yours, my Lord, through all that you have made.*

The new pope has something in common with you. He chose the name of Francis – you are so blessed.