



Some reflections inspired by online copyrighted commentaries and homilies

July 5, 2020 **Fourteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time**

In today's gospel, Jesus says that his yoke is easy, and his burden is light. These seem to be contradictions in terminology. If a burden is light, how can it be burdensome? And if the yoke is easy it makes about as much sense as a comic tragedy or a peaceful storm. Jesus' sayings today at first seem confusing. But if we take some time to reflect upon them, it becomes clear that Jesus has designated something that we all know is true from our own experiences.

A yoke is something that binds us to something else. And we all know that when we commit ourselves to someone in relationship or something of value, the result will be a mixture of what is easy and what is difficult in that union, a combination of both joy and hurt. Parents can testify to this better as they have raised and nurtured their children. There are few greater joys in life than the joy of knowing and loving a son or daughter. Yet that relationship can sometimes cause tremendous pain, if we have to see a child suffer from bad choices, or if our relationship to our child begins to decline. Parents will now see and understand the meaning of Jesus' words.

It is always blessing when you find another person with whom we can share life intellectually, spiritually, sexually. Yet at the same time, what a challenge it is to have patience and forgiveness when your spouse grows thoughtless or begins to propagate in a new direction. Jesus' words certainly ring true to anyone who has ever tried to accomplish some significant good thing or to bring more justice into the world. Such an effort is filled with the frustrations of ignorance, bureaucracy, and indifference. But at the same time, there are moments of bliss when even one step is taken in the right direction or even a few people begin to understand the worthiness of their actions.

Human life will always be a mixture of the easy and the difficult, a burden that is also light. What Jesus have to say about this mixed reality of life is that we all live? Jesus invites us to place our light burden into a relationship with our heavenly Father. In today's gospel Jesus prays to his father, and there are two virtues to his prayer: blessing and knowledge. Jesus gives thanks to his father for revealing what is true to his followers and for allowing us to learn what in life has true value. We are called to follow Jesus' example in our own prayers, to be thankful for all the joys and blessings that are in our life and to learn from the mistakes and pain that we will surely endure. Thank God, we are people of faith, we believe that all the good things in our lives are precious gifts from God and a sign of God's love for us. For all of our blessings we are challenged to give Him thanks. Because we are believers, we also trust that that same good God can draw out of our pain and suffering something to learn, a truth that can make us stronger and give us the courage to carry the burdens we must bear. In these trying times, of Covid-19 and civil unrest, I believe we have held on and continue to endure because of our faithfulness and belief in the power of God.

Human life is not completely easy or completely difficult. It is both. It is the light burden, the easy yoke that we must take up. That is why as people of faith, we should always and constantly give thanks for the people, for the talents, for the opportunities with which God has blessed us. In these trying times when we continue to pray "Lord Heal Our Land", we should dare to believe that God will lead us through and learn from our suffering and our pain, so that in time we will have even more reason to give thanks to the God who loves us.