

## **Fourteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time / Year A / July 5, 2020 (Fr. Giese)**

I believe that most people would find comfort and consolation in the gospel passage we just heard, especially in Jesus' invitation to those who are burdened and weary to come to him and find rest. Maybe it has even greater meaning now as we are all feeling more burdened by the constraints of the epidemic which seems to be going on and on. But even without an epidemic we can all feel at times weary and burdened by cares, responsibilities, worries, obligations and at moments, by life itself. So, it is consoling that in Jesus we can find the rest and relief we desire.

However, to do so we should understand that the nature of the invitation Jesus extends to the burdened and weary. First, it is an invitation to those who are like Jesus himself who is, as he described himself, humble of heart. For us, having a humble heart means admitting that you need Jesus, that you need his wisdom, that you need his mercy, that you need his healing, that you need his grace, that you need his morality, and that you need him to lead you and guide you through life.

Having a humble heart, though, is not something that comes easily or even naturally to most people. We are gifted as individuals and as a species with extraordinary abilities. We are intelligent and have self-awareness. We are creative and can understand complex concepts and solve problems both real and theoretical. We are builders and alter the world to fit our needs. We discover things and explore the world around us from the cellular level to the heavens above. We can learn and acquire wisdom from our own experiences and the experiences of others. We are extraordinary beings. So extraordinary that we can believe we do not need God very often or even at all.

But that is not true. It never has been and never will be because we are also frail and mortal. We age and die and cannot give ourselves more life. We cannot always control our impulses and we can be both self-centered and selfish. We can heal but we can also wound and be wounded. We can grow tired and stumble. We can make mistakes and be wrong about people and the things we think are important. We can know exactly what the right thing to do is and then go ahead and do what is wrong while knowing it is wrong. We can inflate our own importance and believe ourselves to be more than we are while lessening the value of others.

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We can be governed by pride and sin and we are quite capable of destroying the very things that would make us truly happy.

The truth is, we need Jesus and all that Jesus offers us that comes from God. To understand that is not weakness. It is intelligence and wisdom enlightened by humility. And humility is having a right understanding of who you really are and we can never know who we really are without acknowledging our need for God Which brings us to the second part of Jesus' invitation to find rest in him. The invitation begins with Jesus saying "Come to me..." and includes the encouragement to take his yoke upon yourself and learn from him. In other words, it is an invitation to come to him, to come now, and to come and stay with him, in his company and to share life with him, his life.

The truth is, that is the only way we actually know the encouragement and rest Jesus provides. It is an act of faith and faith is like so many other important dimensions of our hearts, or our souls. You don't turn honesty on and off, practice now and then and still be an honest person. You don't extend compassion to this person and not to that one and still be a compassionate person. You don't forgive here but not there and still be someone who is merciful. You don't love only sometimes and have a heart that loves. Neither do we come to Jesus now and then and still come to know him, trust him, believe him, love him and find rest in him.

No. When we come to Jesus we must come to stay. And if we do, we will know all that has been revealed to God's little ones. We will come to know that the yoke of Jesus is not hard to wear because he shares it with us. We will find our burdens lighter because Jesus lifts them with us.