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Thursday's Gospel: Jesus Gives Meaning to our Fatigue

Gospel for Thursday in the 15th
Week of Ordinary Time, and
commentary.

Gospel (*Mt 11:28-30*)

Jesus said:

“Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

Commentary

Holy Scripture often speaks of life in terms of a pilgrimage. We are walking, personally and as a people, towards a place of rest that we cannot fully enjoy here. But the one who will provide us with this rest, Christ, is walking with us. In fact, He is walking “in us,” and that is why we can already rest while we are on this pilgrimage, even if we cannot yet experience it fully. The key is to realize that Jesus is present in our heart and to place ourselves in his hands: to walk in dialogue with Him, sharing with Him all our desires and concerns.

Shortly before the words we read in the Gospel for today’s Mass, Jesus has spoken about the need for good shepherds who go out to work for the abundant harvest (cf. *Mt* 9:35-38). He

has chosen the Twelve Apostles and given them instructions for their mission (cf. *Mt* 10:1-42). He has stressed the attitude needed by those to whom the Gospel is preached (cf. *Mt* 11:1-24), and raised up a beautiful hymn of thanksgiving to the Father for having wanted to reveal divine marvels to those who are little (cf. *Mt* 11:25-27). It is not only the normal pilgrimage of daily life that produces fatigue and exhaustion; we also have to contest with that produced by our mission to spread the Gospel.

Although, in reality, our entire Christian life is mission: these two things can never be separated.

Fatigue and exhaustion can also come when those to whom we have been sent don't want to listen. Christ helps us to understand this tiredness (cf. *Col* 1:24), and to carry out the mission of living the Gospel message ourselves and bringing it to others with a right intention. We don't talk

about God only to those we know will respond. When sending out Jeremiah and Ezekiel, the Lord told them that many people will refuse to listen to them. But at least no one will be able to say now that no prophet had been sent to them (cf. *Jer* 7:27; *Ezek* 2:5).

With his life, Christ has left us clear footprints to follow in (cf. *1 Pet* 2:21), and in doing so has given meaning to our own fatigue. He walked and walks among us, with his gently and humble heart, like a good shepherd who never tires of searching and caring for his sheep. When we have his heart, the burden of this life, without ceasing to be a burden, is borne in a new way. As Saint Paul wrote: “I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us” (*Rom* 8:18).

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