

Your Lourdes Sunday Liturgy at Home

14th Sunday in Ordinary Time

July 5, 2020

“Come unto me....”

In today’s Gospel, Jesus beckons us “to come unto me” and to learn from him and lean on him. In our current moment, these inviting, comforting words are the soul healers we probably need to hear and heed. Then we can sing with joy about “how we got over.”

Today’s Gospel challenges us to be as simple, as meek and humble, as obedient as Jesus himself. He leads us to give thanks when we are thrown off center, diverted from our own plans and schemes. Jesus offers his own yoke of trusting that God is present and leading us in the precise circumstances of each moment — whether or not we would have chosen them.

This familiar saying of Jesus only is found in Matthew’s Gospel (11:28-30):

²⁸ “Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest.²⁹ Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart; and you will find rest for yourselves. ³⁰ For my yoke is easy, and my burden light.”

In the Cotton Patch Gospel, Clarence Jordan does a down home paraphrase of the same passage:

“Come to me, all of you who are frustrated and have had a bellyful, and I will give you zest. Get in the harness with me and let me teach you, for I am trained and have a cooperative spirit, and you will find zest for your lives. For my harness is practical, and my assignment is joyful.”

The original still sounds better, except for Jordan’s substitution of “zest” for “rest.” We all could use a bit more of zest these days.

We urban post-modern people perhaps need a refresher course in Yoke 101. A yoke is a heavy piece of wood carried around the necks and shoulders of a pair of oxen, water buffalo, plough horses or mules to enable them to be linked together to pull a plough, cart, wagon or other farm machinery.

Jesus says what he asks of us – his yoke – is light, compared to weightiness of the hundreds of commands of Jewish law. But another meaning can be seized from this image. The yoke we have is easy to pull because the other person in that yoke tugging along with us is Jesus. Imagine that! “Take my yoke upon you and learn from me,” Jesus says in Matthew 11:29. His invitation is an echo of a similar one by Wisdom in Sirach (51:23, 26): “Draw near to me, you who are uneducated, and lodge in the house of instruction....Put your neck under her yoke, and let your souls receive instruction.”

At the beginning of today’s Gospel, Jesus is stung by the rejection of his preaching by the elite. He prays “I give praise to you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, for although you have hidden these things from the wise and the learned you have revealed them to little ones....” Does that exclude us? We certainly aren’t untutored. Just who are these “little ones”? They are the “*Anawim* of God” is heard frequently in the Hebrew Scriptures. In Hebrew, *Anawim* means “those who are bowed down.” They are the poor of every sort: the vulnerable, the marginalized, and socio-economically oppressed, those of lowly status without earthly power. In fact, they depend totally on God and the kindness of the community.

So is Jesus saying that only the naïve or the needy find answers in him? Remember that Jesus does have a preference hang out with the poor and reach out first to the children, the possessed, the infirm, the leper, the rejected. The key insight here is that Jesus’ message is impenetrably obscure to folks whose heads and hearts are too full of their own ideas and opinions. They are the self-appointed wise and worldly who can’t afford to jeopardize their hard-won and rigidly held security, maybe even their identity, by opening themselves to the alternatives Jesus presents. The risk involved in exposing themselves to an alternative perception of life and faith is an option that sounds foolish to a lot of people. And Jesus celebrates that liberation: “You must lose your life to save it.”

Biblical commentator Mary McGlone points out that in the Gospels, the word “meek” appears only twice and both those times are in Matthew. In this week’s passage, Jesus says, “I am meek and humble of heart.” Earlier in Matthew’s beatitudes, Jesus proclaims, “Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth” (5:5). According to commentator Daniel Harrington in *The Gospel of Matthew*, the meek are the *anawim* of the Hebrew Scriptures, that is the poor, the vulnerable, the marginalized, those who had no one on whom to rely other than their God. What the idea of being “humble of heart” adds to meekness is the element of choice. To be poor is an involuntary condition and everyone is poor in the face of God. Because the heart is the source of volition, being humble of heart indicates a choice to recognize and accept one’s innate poverty. So there’s hope for us, we can recognize our brokenness and vulnerability to chose to join the poor in solidarity.

An example of the Anawim sharing in the ministry of Jesus can be seen in “The Friendship Bench” project, designed by a University of Zimbabwe psychiatrist Dr. Dixon Chibanda. He had to do something. His country had two psychiatrists and a handful of psychologists, and 10 million people. More than a third of the people with medical problems had psychological roots to those issues.

In this program, also called “The Grandmother’s Bench,” Dr. Chibanda’s team trains a group of wisdom figures or elders, who sit on a bench under a shade tree and hear out clients who most frequently suffer from depression. But they don’t use psychoanalytic terms but rather apply the wisdom of the community to help sort out and talk out the “blues” someone is experiencing. And it’s taken off. Other countries, including ours, are adopting the system. What’s pleasantly puzzling is that the elders, in many cases actual grandmothers, don’t get “burnt out” hearing clients. They feel useful. For more information, listen to this BBC radio documentary:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/w3ct0w55>

Also for you Independence Day weekend reading, here’s an excerpt of Frederick Douglass’ 1852 address, “What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?” given at Corinthian Hall in Rochester on July 4th. National Museum of African American History and Culture blog site, <https://nmaahc.si.edu/blog-post/nations-story-what-slave-fourth-july>

Take a listen to one or both of these anthems and then move into the Scriptures.

“How I Got Over” – Mahalia Jackson live performance

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l49N8U3d0Bw>

“How I Got Over” sung by Mahalia Jackson in newsreel of the March on Washington, 1963

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TALcOreZioA>

1st Reading – Zechariah 9:9-10

9 Thus says the LORD: Rejoice heartily, O daughter Zion, shout for joy, O daughter Jerusalem! See, your king shall come to you; a just savior is he, meek, and riding on an ass, on a colt, the foal of an ass.

10 He shall banish the chariot from Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem; the warrior’s bow shall be banished, and he shall proclaim peace to the nations. His dominion shall be from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth.

The Word of the Lord.....Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm – Psalms 145:1-2, 8-9, 10-11, 13-14

R. I will praise your name for ever, my king and my God.^{[L][SEP]}

1 I will extol you, O my God and King,^{[L][SEP]}

and I will bless your name forever and ever.^{[L][SEP]}

2 Every day will I bless you,^{[L][SEP]}

and I will praise your name forever and ever.^{[L][SEP]}

R. I will praise your name for ever, my king and my God.

8 The LORD is gracious and merciful,^{[L][SEP]}

slow to anger and of great kindness.^{[L][SEP]}

9 The LORD is good to all,^{[L][SEP]}

and compassionate toward all his works.^{[L][SEP]}

R. I will praise your name for ever, my king and my God.

10 Let all your works give you thanks, O LORD,^{[L][SEP]}

and let your faithful ones bless you.^{[L][SEP]}

11 Let them discourse of the glory of your kingdom^{[L][SEP]}

and speak of your might.^{[L][SEP]}

R. I will praise your name for ever, my king and my God.^{[L][SEP]}

¹³ The LORD is faithful in all his words^{[L][SEP]}
and holy in all his works.^{[L][SEP]}

¹⁴ The LORD lifts up all who are falling^{[L][SEP]}
and raises up all who are bowed down.^{[L][SEP]}

R. I will praise your name for ever, my king and my God.^{[L][SEP]}

2nd Reading – Romans 8:9, 11-13

⁹ Brothers and sisters: You are not in the flesh; on the contrary, you are in the spirit, if only the Spirit of God dwells in you. Whoever does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him.

¹¹ If the Spirit of the one who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, the one who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also, through his Spirit that dwells in you.

¹² Consequently, brothers and sisters, we are not debtors to the flesh, to live according to the flesh.

¹³ For if you live according to the flesh, you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.

The Word of the Lord.....Thanks be to God.

Alleluia – CF. Matthew 11:25

R. Alleluia, alleluia.^{[L][SEP]}

²⁵ Blessed are you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth; you have revealed to little ones the mysteries of the kingdom.^{[L][SEP]}

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

A Reading from the Gospel According to Matthew [11:25-30]

²⁵ At that time Jesus exclaimed: “I give praise to you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, for although you have hidden these things from the wise and the learned you have revealed them to little ones.

²⁶ Yes, Father, such has been your gracious will.

²⁷ All things have been handed over to me by my Father.

No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son wishes to reveal him.”

²⁸ “Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest.²⁹ Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart; and you will find rest for yourselves. ³⁰ For my yoke is easy, and my burden light.”

The Gospel of the Lord.....Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.

Reflection Prompts:

First listen to “Come Unto Me” by Hezekiah Walker and the Love Fellowship Tabernacle Choir:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v_58qF7MhYQ

So many persons carry heavy burdens, especially the poor and those living on the margins of society. Jesus wants to share their burden and needs us to help him do that.

- How can you take on a share of that burden of those in need?
- What other ways can Lourdes work to lift the yoke of injustice from those who are unjustly bound?
- Who are the “non-invited” who can be invited into the tent of God?

An archbishop who felt comfortable humbly mingling with his flock was the late Archbishop Helder Camara of Recife, Brazil. Dom Helder, as he was called, had a favorite saying: “When I gave food to the poor, they called me a saint. When I asked why the poor were hungry, they called me a communist.”

- How can we individually and as church help address the roots of food deserts, environmental racism, cash bail and other burdens of the poor.

GENERAL INTERCESSIONS – July 5, 2020 FOURTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Presider: Let us pray for all who carry heavy burdens.

Worship Leader

1. For all of us in the church who grow weary or frightened, despite our faith. We pray: **Share our burdens, O God.**
(RESPOND: **Share our burdens, O God.**)
2. For believers who have lost hope and for those who have become cynical, and for those who are overwhelmed by negativity, doubt or confusion. We pray: **Share our burdens, O God.**

3. For catechists, teachers, pastors, theologians, writers and all who are dedicated to sharing the good news. We pray: **Share our burdens, O God.**
4. For research scientists and public health agencies to discover vaccines and medications to target the coronavirus, and for all who risk their lives to provide medical care. We pray: **Share our burdens, O God.**
5. For the millions of unemployed and underemployed people to find jobs with living wages and humane benefits. We pray: **Share our burdens, O God.**
6. For all who seek healing from substance use disorders and mental health issues, that they find help and mutual support. We pray: **Share our burdens, O God.**
7. For all our loved ones in the military and their families, that they be returned to us safely and experience a welcoming community. We pray: **Share our burdens, O God.**
8. For our Stephen Ministry, its leaders, and all Care Team members and receivers here at Lourdes. We pray: **Share our burdens, O God.**
9. For efforts to eradicate racism and white supremacy to receive long-term commitments. We pray: **Share our burdens, O God.**
10. For all those who are separated from us by infirmity, especially those listed in our bulletin, and for all those living with HIV and AIDS, that they know our community's care for them. We pray: **Share our burdens, O God.**
11. For all the dead, that they see God face to face, especially Anthony Lucas and Ralph Phillips for whom this Mass is being celebrated. We pray: **Share our burdens, O God.**

12. Please share any intention you have [PAUSE.....] as well as all our own needs. We pray: **Share our burdens, O God.**

Presider: Good and loving God, we come to you as people who are oft-times burdened. Give us the strength and courage to walk in the light. Help us to encourage one another, so that we may all belong to the One in whose name we pray. LET THE CHURCH SAY – AMEN!

Sing or recite The Lord's Prayer. Then listen to this anthem:

Link for He Got Up – Vashawn Mitchell

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XxAIWeXQp6Y>

Closing Prayer

Lord, you have filled us with every blessing. Grant that we may hold fast to your saving gifts and never cease to sing your praise. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Let the Church say.....Amen!

Lift Every Voice and Sing

by James Weldon Johnson, lyrics (1900)
& J. Rosamond Johnson, music (1905)

Lift every voice and sing,
Till earth and heaven ring,
Ring with the harmonies of Liberty;
Let our rejoicing rise
High as the listening skies,
Let it resound loud as the rolling sea.
Sing a song full of the faith that the dark past has taught us,
Sing a song full of the hope that the present has brought us,
Facing the rising sun of our new day begun,
Let us march on till victory is won.

Stony the road we trod,
Bitter the chastening rod,
Felt in the days when hope unborn had died,
Yet with a steady beat,

Have not our weary feet^{[L][SEP]}
Come to the place for which our fathers sighed?^{[L][SEP]}
We have come over a way that with tears has been watered,^{[L][SEP]}
We have come, treading our path through the blood of the
slaughtered,^{[L][SEP]}
Out from the gloomy past,^{[L][SEP]}
Till now we stand at last^{[L][SEP]}
Where the white gleam of our bright star is cast.^{[L][L][SEP]}

God of our weary years,^{[L][SEP]}
God of our silent tears,^{[L][SEP]}
Thou who has brought us thus far on the way;^{[L][SEP]}
Thou who has by Thy might
Led us into the light,
Keep us forever in the path, we pray.^{[L][SEP]}
Lest our feet stray from the places, our God, where we met Thee,^{[L][SEP]}
Lest, our hearts drunk with the wine of the world, we forget Thee;^{[L][SEP]}
Shadowed beneath Thy hand,^{[L][SEP]}
May we forever stand.^{[L][SEP]}
True to our God,
True to our native land.