

After the Heart of Jesus ...

*“Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened,
and I will give you rest.
Take my yoke upon you and learn from me,
for I am meek and humble of heart;
and you will find rest for yourselves.
For my yoke is easy, and my burden light.”
- Matthew 11:28-30*



Not surprisingly this passage in today’s Gospel is selected as a reading for many funeral Masses. It is chosen for a couple of reasons. Especially when someone dies after a long illness and suffering, we may see death as a release from the pain and burden and an opportunity for a loved one to be embraced by Jesus and given rest and peace. Also, the passage reminds us that when our hearts are burdened, when we are filled with grief and sorrow, God does not say “Snap out of it, get with it, what’s the matter with you.” God instead is imagined as gently saying as Jesus says in this Gospel, “Come to me, and I will give you rest and strength and peace.

Jesus, however, did not intend to restrict this promise to end of life issues. There are many situations when we may feel burdened or weighed down by the labors of life. It could be the stress of decisions to make, the guilt of sin, the pressure of peers, sicknesses and injuries, broken relationships, lost jobs, or the disappointment of regret. Who among us doesn’t know that life is not always easy? And where do we turn when the experiences of life weigh us down and it feels as though the yoke around our shoulders is unbearably heavy? Some turn inward and celebrate pity parties that do little to comfort the soul. Unfortunately some turn to destructive practices of addictions that only add to the burdens. Others try to run away, break off relationships, and flee problems as though that will make them go away. Fortunately in all these situations there is a place to turn, or more accurately a person to turn to – Jesus! When those burdensome times of life weigh us down, may we allow Jesus’ embrace to hold us and His love to lift the heavy yoke so that we may rest in His presence and receive His strength.

The ministry of lifting burdens is one that Jesus entrusted to his Church. To that end, I was so pleased to meet with the group of parishioners who are interested in helping families face the hardships of possible foreclosure. Fourteen of us gathered recently to discuss ways we can reach out to companion families that are threatened with the loss of their homes because of traditional causes of job loss and sickness as well as those who are victims of the recent market conditions with mortgage loans and housing prices. The group included professionals in law, mortgage banking, real estate and short sales, as well as parishioners simply interested in supporting hurting families. There will be an opportunity for additional parishioners to get involved. By the end of this month we should have a workable plan that we hope will make a difference to our parish families. Thank you to all who attended the June 25 meeting.



This weekend we wrap up the Fourth of July holiday. While psychologically it may mark the middle of summer, we really know there are more days of summer ahead than have passed us by. These days can be symbolic of this weekend’s gospel message as well. Vacations and the new experiences of “stay-cations” allow us the opportunity to unwind a bit, rest from the daily labors of our work, and enjoy our families and friends a little more. May you find what you most need in these summer days ahead.

This week parishioners will be receiving postcards announcing the upcoming Parish Family Pictorial Directory. I was thrilled by the generous response of ten parishioners to help in facilitating the publication of this directory. The most important thing you can do help with this directory is to have your FREE family portrait taken to receive your FREE directory. Pictures will be taken from August 5 – 9 (mainly to accommodate families with college students, but all are welcome to sign up for those dates if convenient), Sept. 9 – 12, Sept. 16-20, and Oct. 3-4. Sign-ups can be done either ONLINE by connecting from the link on our parish website or at Church beginning the weekend of July 19/20. We are praying for 100% participation, because our parish directory will not be complete without you. Please mark your calendars today!

As we gather this week to deepen our faith and love for God, may we strive to lift the burdens of others ...

After the Heart of Jesus!
Father John