

My dear brothers and sisters,

No matter how hard we may try, things do go wrong in life! And you don't have to live very long in this world to find this out. Bad things do happen to good people. Some people I know are waiting patiently for biopsy reports on certain abnormal cells that are growing in their body, filled with fear that they may have cancer.

Others are trying so hard to provide for and shape the characters of their children, children that are so influenced by all that is wrong in our culture. All of us are labouring under burdens. In addition to the few things I've just mentioned, many folk pile on to themselves burdens of self-doubt, self-blame, shame, and guilt. They say to themselves: "Somehow, all of this is my fault." "If I were a better wife my husband would notice me more and be more sensitive, considerate and loving towards me." "If I tried harder, I would have a better job or position where I work, and we wouldn't be so strapped for money." "If I were more loving, my teenagers wouldn't be so hostile." And on and on it goes, with those put-me-down tapes constantly playing in our minds.

So isn't it a comfort that in today's Gospel reading we hear some of the nicest, most comforting words in the whole of the bible spoken to us by the Lord when he says: "Come to me, all you who are weary and find life burdensome, and I will give you rest."

How could anyone not be attracted to what Jesus offers us? Why is He so ignored by so many who are not here? But the Christian faith is not magic. Christ's life was not painless and totally free of burdens. Quite the contrary!

What He does offer you, however is His invitation to be yoked with Him, to pull your tasks through life with Him, sharing His yoke, drawing on His strength, and letting Him help you while you help Him accomplish His tasks. Christ doesn't do things *for* you; He does things *with* you. I don't know what your image of God is, and I don't know how you feel about God, but I do know that you need to be yoked with Jesus in accomplishing God's work and in carrying out His tasks

To those who are weighed down with shame and guilt, I would say this. Jesus' mission in life was a mission of forgiveness. Christ never met anyone whose sins were so great that they couldn't be forgiven. The

only thing Jesus could not forgive was an unforgiving spirit. This morning Jesus offers you here something that can make life essentially beautiful for you and for me. The invitation to share his yoke, to pull your situations, your concerns, your burdens through life with him "Come to me," He cries, "all you who are weary and find life burdensome, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon your shoulders and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart. And your souls will find rest, for my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

Brethren, our burdens in life did not come to stay with us and they will not stay with us, forever and ever. They have come, but they will pass! With the strength God gives us, with the strength of our Christian brothers and sisters, and most importantly, with the Lord's help our troubles will pass away!

Sometimes in our Christian lives we can feel that God is so far away from us. It is at those times, however, when we feel God is far away, that in actual fact we are being held so close to God's heart, that just for a short time we cannot see his face. But where better could anyone of us ever hope to be - heart to heart with love himself; and to know that love's name is Jesus Christ, from whom not one of us can ever be separated in this life or in the next.

Love joy and peace to you all.
Fr. Tim