

# Read

Zechariah 9:9-10

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

Romans 8:9, 11-13

Matthew 11:25-30

## LIVING THE WORD

### Fourteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

July 5, 2020



#### REFLECTION

An elementary school teacher shared this Gospel passage with her students. After reading the text together, the teacher asked her students what Jesus means when he says, “my yoke is easy, and my burden light” (Matthew 11:30)? One young boy jumped up with excitement, threw his arm in the air to answer the question, and confidently proclaimed: “Jesus doesn’t like scrambled eggs. He likes them over easy and light.”

This image is not too far off from what we might imagine when we hear today’s Gospel. When Jesus initially spoke these words, however, his disciples would have known exactly what he was talking about. In Jesus’ time, people were familiar with yokes as wooden beams used between a pair of oxen that allowed them to pull heavy loads together. The yokes, laid upon the shoulders of the animals, were custom-fit to ensure both comfort and productivity for the oxen. Jesus uses this image to describe a life of discipleship. Just as the oxen are paired together for the sake of the task, we join Jesus in working toward the common mission of the Kingdom of God. The yoke fits us perfectly and the burden we carry with Jesus is light.



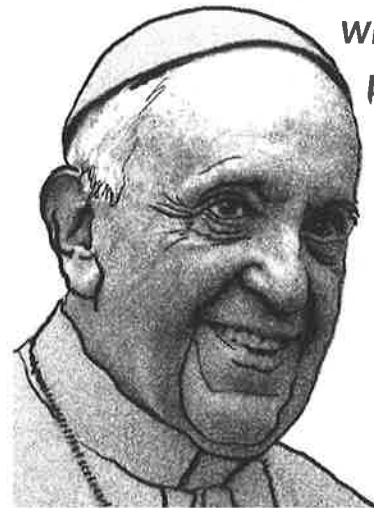
#### ACTION

If Jesus wanted to make the same point today, he might not use the image of yoked oxen. He would certainly use an image, however. What image might Jesus use today to describe the life of discipleship? Retell today’s Gospel to a friend using your image to convey Jesus’ message.

*“By accepting the ‘yoke of Jesus,’  
disciples enter into communion*

*with him and  
participate in  
the mysteries of  
the cross and  
salvation.”*

—Pope Francis



#### ? QUESTIONS

- ❖ What do today’s readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ❖ What “rest” are we looking for in Jesus?
- ❖ Jesus invites us to take the yoke and learn from him. What is Jesus inviting us to learn?



July 5, 2020

## FOURTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

### LECTIONARY #100A

**Zechariah 9:9-10**

**Psalms 145:1-2, 8-9, 10-11, 13-14**

**Romans 8:9, 11-13**

**Matthew 11:25-30**

## Prepare for the Word

*The following elements may be used by the catechist, teacher, or youth minister to prepare to facilitate today's session with teens. You may integrate this information into the reflection and discussion on today's readings.*

### Leader's Context

Jesus' teaching center upon God the Father's revelation through him. Revelation is hidden from the proud and arrogant; those who are childlike are more apt to receive God's revelation. The disciples of Jesus' day were burdened by a strict interpretation of the law; his promise was to relieve this burden.

**Q FOCUS:** *Rest in Christ.*

### Liturgical Calendar Connection

On July 11, we remember St. Benedict, who was the most influential person in the development of Western monasticism. His Rule became the basis for prescribed communal life that finds its primary ways of living in community through liturgical prayer (through the Liturgy of the Hours), manual labor, and study.

### Church Teaching Connection

"We hear the Lord calling the discouraged, the poor and the little ones to himself, all who, unable to count on powerful connections, can rely solely on God . . . in their powerlessness, they trust in God's mercy; they come to Jesus who is their only hope" (Pope Francis, General Audience Address, September 14, 2016).

## Hear the Word

*Use this resource, a Lectionary, or a Bible to proclaim the reading. The book should be held reverently or placed on a lectern. If possible, light a candle that is placed near where the Gospel will be proclaimed. Gesture for teens to stand.*

### Gospel Acclamation

*Use the same musical setting that is used in your parish or at school Masses. Teens may help with music and proclaim the Gospel.*

**Alleluia, alleluia.**

### Gospel

*Matthew 11:25-30*

**Reader:** A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew.

**All:** Glory to you, O Lord.

*All make the Sign of the Cross on their forehead, lips, and heart.*

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

"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.”

**Reader:** The Gospel of the Lord.

**All:** Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

*Everyone may be seated.*

## Reflect on the Word

*When beginning the reflection and discussion about today's readings, first refer to the handout for today. Ask teens what they learned about themselves and about Christian discipleship from performing the action for the week and journaling. Ask teens about the readings of the day: What struck them? What do they think the readings mean? How do the readings affect their own lives? Then begin the following reflection:*

► In what ways are you burdened in life?

► What are the aspects of your life that leave you drained, spent, and spread thin?

Matthew's Gospel account, from which we hear Jesus' teaching today, sheds some light on the real human experience of the times in our lives in which we just need some rest. Before we get to that point, however, let us explore the beginning of today's Gospel text.

Pay attention to what Jesus does at the beginning of this passage. He gives praise to his heavenly Father. Jesus gives honor and glory to his Abba.

► What is the motivation behind this joyous acclamation of praise?

Jesus focuses in on the reality that something special has been revealed to the little ones while having been hidden from those who are the wise ones.

► What is Jesus talking about?

The things that have been hidden from some and revealed to others are the teachings and the actions that Jesus has accomplished. The message that he has shared has been accepted by some (the little ones) while others (the learned and wise) have not accepted them. This acceptance is dependent on God's revelation to people, and those who are able to receive it have had their hearts prepared to do so. Those who are unable to receive the revelation of God through Jesus are those whose hearts refuse to be open to it.

► So who are these people?

We can safely say that those from whom these revelations have been hidden are those who have given Jesus the most trouble in spreading his message; namely, the Pharisees and the scribe who seem to confront Jesus at every opportunity. The little ones are the childlike ones whose hearts are open to fully receiving God's revelation. By the will of God their hearts have been prepared to welcome Christ in their lives. Examine your own heart.

► In what ways is your heart rigid and resistance to welcoming Christ in your life?

► In what ways can your heart be softened so that you can be open to his grace in your life?

The last section of today's Gospel reading centers on the reality of the human experience of being burdened.

► In what ways do you experience feeling burdened or weighted down by something?

► What are the things in your life that drain your energy and motivation?

► Might this passage have another layer of meaning to it?

Think of who Jesus was addressing this teaching to and think of how this connects with the first half of the reading. In what ways were his followers (a.k.a. the "little ones") burdened in following him? They were constricted by the way that the wise ones had been interpreting the Jewish Law. Jesus is offering another direction for them to turn. He is inviting them to place their troubles and struggles and to place them upon his word. He will help them (and us) to carry our burdens and concerns. All we need to do is trust him and allow him to help us in carrying these difficulties of our lives in order to lighten the load.

## Wrapping It Up

*Consider these points to conclude the discussion and reflection. Integrate the thoughts and ideas that surfaced during the discussion as well as the "Church Teaching Connection" on page 226.*

What steps can you take to set aside any pride and arrogance that you have in your life?

**What do you know about God the Father, based upon what you know about Jesus?**

**What are some of the burdens that teenagers carry today?**

## Act on the Word

### **This Baggage Is Weighing Me Down!**

*For this activity, you will need a lot of random items that the youth can use to incorporate into a skit. These can be items from around your house, from the parish youth meeting space, or parish office. The idea for these items are that they can be utilized creatively by the teens to create a skit about the baggage that weighs them down. You can also have construction paper and scissors available for the groups to augment their skit supplies.*

Divide the youth up into groups of four to five youth. Hand out a number of random items to each group and give them the instructions that they are to come up with a skit to represent the “baggage” that weighs them down in their daily lives. Give each group a stack of construction paper and scissors to augment their supplies for creating a skit.

Then, invite each group to get together to plan out a skit to represent what it is like to be burdened down by baggage in their lives. This can be any baggage that they face as teenagers in today’s world (ideas can include annoying younger siblings, embarrassing parents, demands from school, conflict with classmates, gossip, the felt need to “fit in,” and so on). Encourage them to be creative and even to exaggerate the ideas that they come up within their brainstorming. Next, invite each of the groups to actually come up with a story line and to rehearse

it within their group. Then, once all groups have had the opportunity to prepare and rehearse their skit, have your own staging of “Masterpiece Theatre” and have each of the skits performed in front of the larger group.

Once all of the groups have presented their skits, have a debriefing session to discuss what was presented. Encourage them to be open to Jesus’ message in today’s Gospel reading which invites us to come to him, we who are burdened, and to let him help carry the load. Explore some spiritual practices that might assist the youth in being open to Christ’s presence in their lives so that they can offer up some of their baggage to him.

### **Closing Prayer**

*Lord Jesus,  
you are good and loving,  
bearing a great burden and wearing a heavy yoke.  
Your love for the Father and for us allowed you to  
act with joy  
and lightness of heart.  
Show us the way to follow you when life seems  
heavy and unbearable.  
You live and reign for ever and ever.  
Amen.*

### **For Next Sunday**

*To help teens prepare for next Sunday’s Mass, print, email, or share on a blog or social media the handout found on the next page. The JPG and PDF files are available at [www.ltp.org/lwgr](http://www.ltp.org/lwgr). Encourage teens to attend Mass with family or friends.*