



CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF WOLLONGONG

FAITH CIRCLES

WEEKLY SMALL
GROUP CATECHESIS

14TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME • YEAR A



SUNDAY GOSPEL

Jesus the Good Shepherd

Matthew 11:25-30

Jesus exclaimed, “I bless you, Father, Lord of heaven and of earth, for hiding these things from the learned and the clever and revealing them to mere children. Yes, Father, for that is what it pleased you to do. Everything has been entrusted to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, just as no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

“Come to me, all you who labour and are overburdened, and I will give you rest. Shoulder my yoke and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. Yes, my yoke is easy and my burden light.” ■

GOSPEL REFLECTION

Fr Aloysius Rego OCD



Jesus reminds us that the things of God – knowledge of God and relationship with God – cannot be plundered by human cleverness; they are gifts given to those who are childlike, and who know how to receive these gifts.

St Therese of Lisieux is a witness to this truth of the gospel. She received the things of God, not through her own learning/cleverness, but through her childlike attitude of simplicity, poverty, and humility in her relationship with God. Indeed, to the worldly wise/clever, it seems scandalous that she is proclaimed a “Doctor of the Church”. Yet, the Lord has seen fit to communicate his revelation to her, which has been a blessing for countless numbers of people in the Church.

God’s ways are not our ways; and God does not simply follow human logic. We come to intimacy with God not by growing-up, but paradoxically, by growing-down. In revealing and giving himself, God has a predilection for the “little ones”.

In accepting Jesus’ invitation to come to him, we come to meet “the God of Jesus’ – a God of unconditional love – who loves not only the virtuous, but also – and especially – the sinner, the struggling one.” ■

A WORD FROM POPE FRANCIS



In this Sunday's Gospel, we find Jesus' invitation, "Come to me, all who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest"

(Mt 11:28). When Jesus says this, he has before him the people he meets every day on the streets of Galilee: very many simple people, the poor, the sick, sinners, those who are marginalised ... These people always followed him to hear his word — a word that gave hope! Jesus' words always give hope! — and even just to touch a hem of his garment. Jesus himself sought out these tired, worn-out crowds, like sheep without a shepherd, and he sought them out to proclaim to them the Kingdom of God and to heal many of them in body and spirit.

Now, he calls them all to himself, "Come to me," and he promises them relief and rest. This invitation

of Jesus reaches to our day, and extends to the many brothers and sisters oppressed by life's precarious conditions, by existential and difficult situations and at times lacking valid points of reference. In the poorest countries, but also on the outskirts of the richest countries, there are so many weary people, worn out under the unbearable weight of neglect and indifference. Indifference: human indifference causes the needy so much pain! And worse, the indifference of Christians! On the fringes of society, so many men and women are tried by indigence, but also by dissatisfaction with life and by frustration. So many are forced to emigrate from their homeland, risking their lives. Many more, every day, carry the weight of an economic system that exploits human beings, imposing on them an unbearable "yoke", which the few privileged do not want to bear. To each of these children of the Father

in heaven, Jesus repeats, "Come to me, all of you." But, he also says it to those who have everything, but whose heart is empty and without God. Even to them, Jesus addresses this invitation, "Come to me." Jesus' invitation is for everyone. But especially for those who suffer the most.

Jesus promises to give rest to everyone, but he also gives us an invitation, which is like a commandment, "Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and lowly in heart." The "yoke" of the Lord consists in taking on the burden of others with fraternal love. Once Christ's comfort and rest is received, we are called in turn to become rest and comfort for our brothers and sisters, with a docile and humble attitude, in imitation of the Teacher. Docility and humility of heart help us not only to take on the burden of others, but also to keep our personal views, our judgments, our criticism, or our indifference from weighing on them. ■

TALKING POINTS

1. In this beautiful gospel, Jesus again infers the need for us to come to God as little children. What are the features we might identify as those of a trusting child's relationship with a loving parent?
2. Fr Aloysius Rego powerfully highlights for us this week that, "We come to intimacy with God not by growing-up, but paradoxically, by growing-down." In what ways do I need to become more trusting, less sophisticated, more full-of-awe, wonder and expectation of God's greatness in my life?

PRAYER POINTS

Pray for Each Other: Ask about and pray for the needs of the group members. Individuals might pray for themselves or ask someone else to pray for them

Response: *Father we come to you as little children and trust in your love for us.*

Reflect: What are you overburdened with? What do you desire to hand over to the Lord, so that he might give you rest? Pope Francis reminds us of the need to take on the yoke of Jesus, learning from him as we reach out to others? Who and how will I reach out to this week?

Closing Prayer: Lord, we come to you as little children, in awe of your majesty, power and boundless love. We offer you our burdens and ask your help in taking your yoke upon our shoulders, learning from you the way of love.



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