

**My Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,**

**I would hazard a guess that, even as we enter into this last day of a long holiday weekend, there are more than a few of us who are still weary. Would that be true? Ideally a holiday is a time of rest and relaxation. But the reality is that it is often more stressful—if you are entertaining, there are the matters of hospitality that have to be attended to; if families gather, squabbles often arise or fences need to be mended; the young aren't content to sit still, so they often have to be ferried hither and yon. Does any of this speak to the reality of your holiday, or your life?**

**If so, this one's for you: It's Jesus' invitation to you, "Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest." So, sit back, relax, and listen to what Jesus has in mind for you.**

**There is a wonderful legend concerning the quiet years of Jesus, the twenty or so years before his ministry. The legend claims that Jesus the carpenter was one of the master yoke-makers in all of Galilee. People came from miles around for a yoke, hand-carved and crafted by Jesus, son of Joseph.**

**When customers arrived with their team of oxen, Jesus would spend considerable time measuring the team, their height, their width, the space between them, and the size of their shoulders. About a week later the team would be brought back and he would carefully place the newly made yoke over the shoulders, watching for rough places, smoothing out the edges and fitting them perfectly to this particular team of oxen.**

**This is the yoke that Jesus invites you to carry—it is one that he has hand-crafted and carved for you to wear----with Him! Notice he says take MY yoke upon you and learn from me. If we pull together gently and humbly, we can bear this burden together.**

**My Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,**

**Most of us tend to grow weary and feel over-burdened when we feel we are performing a task, going through a trial, suffering an illness, or grieving a loss all alone; when we feel no one is listening, no one cares, no one notices our plight; when we allow fear or anxiety or worry wear us to a frazzle. This is the stuff that wears us out, gives us sleepless nights, and worrisome days.**

**Jesus is calling us: “Come to me...and you will find rest for yourselves. for my yoke is easy and my burden light.” When he speaks the word’ “easy”, the Greek word used is better translated “well-fitted”. With this understanding, what Jesus is saying to each of us is, “I have hand-crafted and carved this yoke for us to carry together. I have already smoothed out the rough places and sharp edges—to carry this burden, now lightened, because it is our burden—lean into it with me, don’t fret over it, don’t worry about it, don’t let it wear you down, lean into it with me, and you will have rest.”**

**However, we also have to be aware that Jesus, in inviting us to come to Him that He may share in carrying our burdens, he is also saying “take MY burden upon you”. In teaming up with us, He is not only willing to take our burdens upon Himself, He is also asking us to share in carrying his burden. “What,” you may ask, “is Jesus burden?” It is right there in His prayer—to do the will of His Father. That is the work of Jesus. That is the work He asks us to carry along with Him. And that work is as He taught us to pray, that the Father’s Kingdom may come to be on earth as it is in heaven.**

**It seems to me that He’s saying to us, “Look, I’m willing to help you carry your burdens, if you’ll help me carry mine. The yoke I have carved and hand-crafted for us to carry is well-fitted to us that will make this burden, this work, easy to do.” That is to say that each of us has a work, a mission to accomplish that the Lord needs us to do with Him, that is, if you will, tailor-made for us to do with Him.**

**Too many of us think that our lives are already too busy, too burdensome to take on a ministry, a work, or a burden in the Church. There are great and good works by each of us if the work of Christ is to be accomplished—that the Father’s Kingdom may come to be on earth as it is in heaven. It may seem impossible to you that you have been chosen to perform them. But Jesus is saying, “Yoke yourself to me and the two of us will do them and more.”**

**He needs our feet to take Him where He is not welcome. He needs our hands to bring His healing touch. He needs our voices to speak His truth. He needs our hearts to make known His compassion and love. This is His burden and because He has carved it out and hand-crafted it to each of us, if we dare to take it up with Him, indeed it will be easy and light.**