

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... For my yoke is easy, and my burden light.
- Matthew 11

Fifteenth Week in Ordinary Time: July 15 - 21, 2012

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Fifteenth Week in Ordinary Time

On the **Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time** we read **Mark's** version of the call of the Twelve - sending them out in teams of two with his healing power and his authority over unclean spirits. He told them "to take nothing for the journey." God would take care of them.

This week, the first readings are from the **Book of the Prophet Isaiah**. The preaching of the first part of Isaiah contains powerful words about the infidelity of the people and the kings, God's sanctions so as to purify a people who would be faithful. On Saturday, we begin reading from the **Book of the Prophet Micah**.

In our readings from **Matthew's Gospel** we read more about the challenge of being a disciple of Jesus. He calls us to a bond with him that is even greater than the bonds of family. "Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it." Jesus reproaches towns where he worked miracles and the people had not repented. Jesus thanks God that, though the wise and the learned remain in unbelief, the childlike are open to God's grace and believe. Jesus says, "Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest." Taking on discipleship we will find that it is easy and we will find rest in him. When controversy comes up about his disciples' picking grain to eat on the Sabbath, Jesus give a startling response to the judgment

Daily Prayer This Week

This week, we are invited to place our trust in God as we respond more and more deeply to the invitation of Jesus to be his disciples. Being his disciple means being connected with him in a bond stronger than any other bond in our life - one which may set us at odds with others. Seeking self-fulfillment will always be frustrating and unattainable. Letting go of ourselves for Jesus' sake brings a fulfillment beyond our imagining.

It is not enough to be part of a wonderful family or outstanding parish community. We need to make our own commitment. Being smart or clever is not what is required of us. Jesus asks us to be childlike: trusting, dependent, open to learning and receiving. Being his disciples means that we come to Jesus with all our needs, especially for the resources we need to serve him. It is as companions of Jesus' own mission that the burden of our mission will become lighter and quite easy. Coming to Jesus will bring refreshment and peace. A sign of our discipleship will never be self righteousness or judging others. What he desires is that our hearts become like his: full of mercy and love. His own heart is moved with pity for those who are wandering, without direction, as though shepherd-less.

How can we find intimacy with God in the midst of our busy lives, while reflecting on our discipleship? By letting these precious messages of Jesus to us settle into our hearts. If we really hear them, they will become a part of us this week. It doesn't take much time; just more focus. Each day, we can let these words of Jesus'

of the Pharisees: "I desire mercy, not sacrifice." Jesus leaves town when the Pharisees want to kill him to fulfill the Prophet Isaiah: "He will not contend or cry out, nor will anyone hear his voice in the streets. A bruised reed he will not break, a smoldering wick he will not quench, until he brings justice to victory."

On the **Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time** we read from the **Book of the Prophet Jeremiah** that God himself will shepherd his people and that a descendant of David will rule with wisdom and justice. **Mark's Gospel** paints a picture of Jesus trying to gather his disciples for a rest together but the people kept coming to them: "his heart was moved with pity for them, for they were like sheep without a shepherd; and he began to teach them many things.

interact with what is going on in our daily lives. The call to be bonded with him might strike a chord in our hearts: I might recognize that my bond with Jesus is weak, and I have a desire for a deeper intimacy. Or, I might hear the invitation to let go of my need for self fulfillment in order to find real meaning in life and the true self within me. Perhaps I might feel the call to repent or to be more trusting and childlike -- or to be less judgmental and more merciful.

All we need to do is to begin each day simply naming these desires that the readings reveal in us. Then, throughout the day, in the in-between times - dressing, showering, walking from one place to another, finding myself alone here or there - I can have brief conversations with Jesus asking for these graces. In particularly difficult times, or in times when my weaknesses reveal themselves to me, I can recognize that desire more deeply and express that to the Lord, growing in gratitude for the intimacy and grace I am experiencing each day.

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