



Sunday July 5, 2020  
Matthew 11:16-19, 25-30

Anthony Acompanado  
Director of Faith Formation

I'm exhausted. I'm stressed to my absolute limit. I'm so tired I can't even think straight. I feel drained. I'm running on empty. I'm on the edge of burnout. My life is falling apart. I'm ready to throw in the towel.

I'm guessing that at some point in your life, you've either expressed these sentiments yourself or heard someone else say something similar. My friends, we live in a fast-paced, constantly on the go, get-ahead-of-the-pack or get-left-behind world – hurrying, working too hard, and straining to overachieve until our energy is sapped, our sanity depleted, and our well-being torn to pieces.

It seems all of us have some sort of burden to bear, some sort of troubles and problems that we carry with us. Some face the burden of bodies that don't do exactly what you want them to do, while others face the prospect of living life alone after the death of a loved one. Still others have the burden of broken relationships with either their children, their spouses, relatives, or friends. Coping with this world all alone or living in tension with someone that we care about, can be an extremely heavy burden to carry.

There are some who face the burden of making choices. Wondering what you will do with your life, and when you finally *do* make a decision, wondering if it will be the *right* one. And there are other kinds of burdens that we face – burdens of sin or temptation, burdens of guilt, burdens of unexpected and unwanted diagnoses, burdens of living up to our own or others unrealistic expectations for us, burdens of conflicting loyalties, burdens of providing for our families – this life is filled with stress, cares, worries, and all kinds of situations that call for us to make choices that sometimes aren't all that pleasant to make.

Well, *if* you've ever found yourself feeling like this, then you've come to the right place this morning because this place is for tired and weary people. In our text for today, Jesus gives his hearers a clear invitation and a promise: "Come to me, all you that are weary and carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest." So, just when it seems like the burdens of this life may have gotten the best of us, our Gospel text from Matthew offers us comforting assurance that we are not alone with these burdens.

Jesus is saying, come to me all who are struggling with life in any way and those of you who have burdens that you cannot carry alone, and *I will help you with your struggles*. Jesus knew that all people at some point would have a difficult path to follow in life – that tragedy, sorrow, disappointment, depression, failure, and grief would eventually visit every one of us. But Jesus says he will help us, he will walk beside us, and that he will help us carry our load.

Jesus tells us loud and clear this morning, we don't have to live life alone, we don't have to live with all of our failures, with all of our frustrations, with all of our burdens – but we must bring them to him. And then *he* will shoulder them with us, in fact, he will take most of the weight of our burdens upon himself. He will carry our burdens, and he will lighten our loads. Jesus also goes on to say that he won't make our load heavy by adding other things in place of those he has taken away – in other words, he won't put additional demands upon our lives, or give us things we have to do to earn his



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assistance. Instead, he tells us he is gentle, and kind and he will give us rest for our souls if we just come to him.

It seems though that there are many people across the world who have this view of Christianity in which Jesus will replace one set of burdens with another – that they will have to take on living a perfect life or be miserable destined not to enjoy life. But on the contrary, Jesus relieves our burdens so that we can *enjoy* life, so that we can *live* in his love, so that we can enjoy all the gifts of creation that God has made for us.

He carries our burdens and replaces them not with the strictness of the law of do this and don't do that, but he replaces it with the security of love, with the gentleness of compassion, and with the tenderness of forgiveness. And when our lives are filled with that – with love, with compassion, with forgiveness, then we'll be free to look at those around us and reach out with Jesus' love to those who are hurting, struggling, and needing help carrying the burdens of life.

Jesus helps us carry our burdens because he wants us to be free to enjoy this life, to reach out to others, and most importantly to share his great gift of love with others. This is important for all of us because each one of us has our own life story filled with burdens, problems, and heartaches – and all of us need to hear over and over again that we are loved, we are valued and that we are not alone in this life. We have someone to share our burdens with, someone who truly cares for us, and that someone is Jesus. He says come. The invitation is given to each of us – come to Jesus, come to him with your cares, come to him with your problems, come to him with all the burdens of life and he will help you carry them.

Jesus wants us to come and place our burdens on him so we can be free to live life, to enjoy life, and to share Jesus' life with others so that they too might experience the Good News of God's love in Christ Jesus in their lives.

And every one of us needs someone to share something with. And as people who have shared our lives with Jesus, we in turn can be open to listening to the life stories of others, to share in their brokenness, to walk beside them in their journey and share something of ourselves and share something of Christ with them to make *their* burdens lighter. We're called together as the Body of Christ, not as isolated islands, but as a living, working body which shares not only the joys but also the hurts, heartaches, and problems of this life with each other.

There's an old story which tells of a man who came upon a little boy carrying an even smaller boy who was unable to walk on his own. "That's quite a heavy burden for you to carry, said the man." "That's no burden," the boy answered, "That's my little brother."

The story that God will give us rest reminds me of another story – the contemporary parable about the footprints in the sand. Two pairs of footprints were in the sand, walking side by side. Suddenly, there was only one set of footprints. God said, "That's when I picked you up and carried you." This familiar parable reminds us how Jesus picks us up and carries us and we don't even realize it. When those two sets of footprints in the sand become one, it isn't that God abandons us leaving us to walk alone in life,



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rather, the one set of footprints in the sand is God relieving us of our burdens and carrying us at that moment in life.

If we can dare to let go of the heavy, wearisome burdens that we put on ourselves as well as those we allow others to thrust upon us, and instead, take up the yoke of acceptance of our own beloved self in Christ – then we can begin to experience the rest that Jesus promises us. “Come to me,” Jesus invites. Jesus is offering us a grace filled invitation, “Come to me, all you that are weary and carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest.” “Come, my beloved.” The only question now is, will you accept his invitation? Thanks be to God. Amen!