

17. July 2025

The yoke of Jesus

Mt 11:28-30

'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.'

Many people feel crushed under a heavy burden, which they are barely able to bear and which seems to rob their whole existence of joy, determining all their feelings. Already when they wake up they are weighed down by this burden and have to struggle all day long not to sink under it.

It is not only the burdens of our earthly life or those resulting from guilt that trouble our conscience, or from illness, or from family problems, and so on. There can also be inner burdens that are the result of a difficult past or of strong childhood experiences that have not yet really healed. They may not even be consciously remembered, but they have an effect on the inner self and cause disquiet in the soul.

This word of the Lord is especially addressed to those who are carrying such burdens. He wants them to come to Him, to entrust their difficulties to Him, to open up to Him their inner anguish, the causes of which we often do not know....

The Lord's merciful gaze sees us in our physical, moral and spiritual misery. We could say that He offers us an exchange: "Take my yoke upon you and I will take yours".

What might this yoke of Jesus be? To clarify it for us, He adds these words:

"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".

To bear the yoke of the Lord means to walk His ways in intimate union with Him, seeing our life from His perspective and letting ourselves be formed by Him. Under this yoke, we are to discover that God is able to use for our good all that has happened to us, including the injustices we suffer or have suffered at the hands of others. Under His

yoke, we learn to listen to God and not to fall into the traps of our own lives. His yoke will teach us to do good and comfort us in our need, but it will also show us that there are people who go through even greater suffering. Jesus' yoke will teach us to seek the Father's Will and to live in it, and will make us understand the infinite love He has for us. His yoke will make love grow in us, and it is precisely this love that makes the burden light so that it does not crush us. Just as Jesus took upon Himself our sins, He will also take upon Himself the burdens of our life and lighten them.

Seeing what I have said so far, I would like to conclude that the gentle yoke of Jesus is the Holy Spirit that He has sent us.

Let us recall some invocations addressed to Him in the Pentecost Sequence: *"Come, thou Father of the poor"; "Pleasant coolness in the heat"...* And, even more clearly: *"Solace in the midst of woe"; "Light immortal, Light divine, visit thou these hearts of thine, and our inmost being fill."* *"On our dryness pour thy dew, wash the stains of guilt away, bend the stubborn heart and will"...*

Each verse in this sequence reveals to us what the yoke of Jesus is like. The gentle and clear guidance of the Holy Spirit constantly reminds us of Jesus' words (cf. Jn 14:26). Thus, we can say that the Lord gives us His yoke by sending us His Spirit, so that we are guided by the same Spirit that moved Him, in obeying His heavenly Father at all times.

This is the great turning point in our life: the Lord takes our burden and we take His gentle yoke. Thus we shall find rest in our souls, we shall be able to "come home", so to speak, to a home that remains for eternity. The restlessness of the heart will fade away and, in time, we may notice that our life is changing, so that the heaviness gives way, and in the depths of our soul dwells someone who spreads His light in us. If we do not turn our backs on Him, we will be able to perceive more and more the presence of this divine Guest within us.