

I come to you in the name of one God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

We all seek rest. Rest is something that is often desired long before we can have it, and when we do receive it, even if just for a moment, it is cherished. We cherish rest because it is an unburdening, it is an easing of the day's struggles, the physical or emotional pain we are feeling, an easing of our bodies and our minds so that we can catch up to what is going on, so that we can re-engage with the world with renewed energy, renewed effort. We find rest in a myriad of ways. For some, vacations wait in the distance as opportunities to take prolonged rest, to escape, to disconnect, before we are forced back into the "real" world. For others, simply enjoying a favorite tv show, dabbling in a favorite hobby, escaping into the world of a good book, or my favorite, taking in the latest movies by yourself, is enough to recharge for the next week, or day, or even simply the rest of the day. We seek out opportunities for rest because we are wearied by this world. It seems as though the weight of this world rests upon our shoulders. It seems as though that weight seeks to crush us into submission, to give into the weariness of this world, to be downtrodden, heavy-laden, to fail to seek rest because of the inevitability that awaits us.

And this is perhaps for good reason. We are wearied by many things in this world. We are wearied by jobs, even jobs we love, because not everything works out the way we would hope, not everything progresses with the speed we want, not everything clicks in the manner we would like to see. We are wearied by the news. News of gun violence, of innocent black lives being taken and no consequences being set down for their white murderers who were supposed to be protecting and serving, news of environmental catastrophes, climate change forever altering the landscapes by melting ice that has

persisted for many millennia before. News of political posturing, bickering, hate, fear, and a failure to look out for the best interests of all in favor of the bottom line of the few. We are wearied by family and friends, who test us, who hurt us, who won't accept our help, who won't accept anyone's help, who don't know that they need help.

And, we are wearied by our own failings. We are not perfect. We all have failings, we all have shortcomings, we all have days when the baby is crying and you can't do anything to make her stop, and while you'll never stop loving her, you wonder if you have to like her very much in that moment. We are wearied by the burdens we carry. Burdens of being the breadwinner. Burdens of making sure your children have every opportunity for success, and wondering how to afford all of that. Burdens of being the caretaker in your family or of always needing care, of being the responsible one of your friends or of always being the irresponsible unreliable one of your friends. Our burdens manifest themselves in many ways, many forms, in long-standing understandings, and short intense moments of stress. These burdens can be quite large, looming over us, weighing on us, dragging us down, slowing our momentum, taking our energy, our enthusiasm, leaving us wanting rest, especially when there is no rest in sight.

It is here that Jesus Christ intervenes. It is here that we must let Jesus Christ intervene. Jesus speaks to us from Matthew's gospel today saying "Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

Wow, we say. That is quite the enticing offer. Jesus is here offering to us his yoke, his burdens, they are easy, light, and through him we will find rest for our souls. But, we must stop and think about this yoke, this burden, that we are to take and learn from Jesus. Are they really as easy and light as he says? For if we think about it a little deeper, the yoke, the burden that Christ carries is death, death for the salvation of all creation, forgiveness for all of our sins. How is this a burden, a yoke that is easy and light. Perhaps, it's a simple matter of perspective. When we take Christ's yoke, learn from him, learn gentleness, humbleness, perhaps it is in this learning that the offer for rest is realized, perhaps it is in this learning that our own burdens, our own yokes, are put into a new light, a new understanding, and the rest that is always on offer begins to be that much more attainable, that much more readily present.

So, what happens if we accept this offer from Christ? What happens if we take his yoke, his burden, and learn from him?

Isn't that why we're here?

Church, our experience of coming to and being part of church, is a place of rest. At the very least, Church should be a place we seek for rest. Sure, like many other areas of life there are stresses at church, particularly if you're involved in different ministry programs, in parish leadership, or in wondering what the appropriate level of noise is coming from your children in the pews (all levels are appropriate, by the way). We have stress from the big events we throw, honoring our own, celebrating events throughout the year. We have stress from being the Cathedral and hosting major events like art shows, national conferences, major liturgical celebrations, there are stresses at church. There is even now

the stress of uncertainty as we approach a time of transition, a time of grieving now, and a time of guarded optimism as we eventually welcome in a new Dean. With all of this stress it can be easy to forget that the Church is a place, a home for rest.

And, it can't be anything else. If we take Christ at his word, then this work here, the stresses that are present even here in this holy place of rest, becomes much less stressful, becomes much less of a barrier to our finding rest, because when we take Christ at his word, we begin to trust in God to lead us, we begin to trust that the Holy Spirit is here guiding us, we seek and find Christ offering and giving rest here each and every week. This is the place where we are reminded that the yoke is easy, the burden light, when we take on the mantle of Christ. This is the place where we are made aware of God's presence in our lives, day in and day out, abiding in us, advocating for us, enabling us to make peace and find rest for our souls.

We need rest. We need to seek it out. We need to hold onto it when we find it. We need to cherish those moments of rest we can find each day. We need to honor our rest, honor our need for it, honor the presence of God that so permeates it. It is rest which enables us to step up and face the world, particularly when we don't want to. It is rest which emboldens us to fight against injustice, to speak truth to power, to spread the Good News to all who have ears to hear or eyes to see.

I want to close today with a favorite prayer of mine from our Compline service (slightly altered): Be present, O merciful God, and protect us through the hours of both this day and night, so that we who are wearied by the changes and chances of this life may rest in your eternal changelessness; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.