

## Scripture Reading

### **A reading from the Gospel according to Matthew** (Matthew 11:28-30)

Come to Me, all you who are weary and burdened, 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. The Gospel of the Lord. R. Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ.

### **Reflection – We choose the yoke we put on – we choose whom we serve**

**We choose the yoke we put on – we choose whom we serve.** The yoke is a symbol of service, hard work and servitude. It is a wooden structure placed on the neck of farm animals to restrain them to work in the field usually in ploughing or pulling a load. Once it is put on, the animal cannot run away. We have been given freewill. We can choose the type of yoke we put on ourselves. We are either in servitude to God or to ourselves. In this Gospel passage, Jesus is telling us that the burden we placed on ourselves is too great for our souls. As a result, many souls are weary and burdened. Jesus tells us that to get true rest for our souls, we need to take His yoke (cf. Matthew 11:29 -30).

**Jesus stresses humility and gentleness.** Without humility and gentleness, Jesus would never be able to carry out the plan of salvation of His Heavenly Father. Jesus said: Learn from Me for I am gentle and humble of heart (cf. Matthew 11:29). The attitude Jesus ardently desires we learn from Him is His humility. Whatever Jesus teaches us, He backs it up by giving us the sterling example of His own life. Though He is truly God, Jesus does not cling on to what belongs to Him but out of obedience to His Heavenly Father, divests Himself of all divine glory in order to become like us so that God's plan of salvation can be brought to fruition. Jesus came to us in the flesh not demanding the homage and honour due to Him but to serve us by His death on the Cross to give us eternal life, to share His glory in heaven. Without being humble like Jesus, we would not be able to take on God's yoke for us – His loving will for us, a roadmap for us to walk to heaven.

**We are either in servitude to God or ourselves.** We carry a heavy burden in our soul when we are in servitude to ourselves. We do not have real peace which is given by Jesus to those who can receive it (cf. John 14:27). We lack peace when the desires and inclinations of our spirit and body are torn in opposite directions. *Those who live according to the flesh have their minds set on what the flesh desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. The mind governed by the flesh is death, but the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace* (Romans 8:5-6). Our 'self' is a terrible master who, leading out of pride and selfishness, will bring us to the path of destruction. Servitude to our fleshy self burdens our soul with unacknowledged sins which render it unprepared for final divine judgement.

**The self-made yoke we place on ourselves is crushing and heavy, and leads only to misery and slavery to evil.** When faith takes a back seat, pride and fears take over. Pride falsely magnifies our virtues and the faults of others. Pride leads us to cling on to, insist on or persist in our human opinion, wounded feelings, hurts, grudges, prejudices, judgementalism, hard-heartedness, stubbornness, egoism, self-righteousness, legalism, unbending ways, stinginess, preoccupation with self and attachment to things/people and anything we consider ours, forgetting that all the good things in our life are graces from God. Pride makes it extremely difficult to forgive. Pride renders the heart fragile and more susceptible to hurts and woundedness. On the other hand, unholy fear, a close relative of pride, can stop us doing the right thing especially if it is against popular opinion. Once we are driven by our self, we operate out of pride and human feelings instead of faith in God.

**Conversation with Jesus:** Precious Lord, Your will for me is holy love itself. After making such a big Sacrifice for my sins on Calvary, the thing You desire most is that I live my life in eternity with You in our true home in heaven. When I voluntarily put on Your yoke, I surrender my freewill to walk in Your footsteps. Lord, show me the way I should walk in the Truth. I want to be bound by bands of Your love. Then sin and evil will have no victory over my soul. Adhering to Your teachings and commandments out of love for You will be sweet burden for my soul. Even on this earthly pilgrimage, I will find rest and peace for my soul. Lord, give me holy wisdom and humility so that I may always choose Your yoke as a proof of my love for You. For You are the Author of my soul and only You know how to make it fit to stand before You when my days on earth are over. Mary, Mother of Salvation, pray for me. Thank You, Jesus. Praise You, Jesus.