

Homily – July 5, 2026

Are you tired? Are you worn out? Are you burnt out on religion?  
Come to me, Jesus says.  
Get away with me and you'll recover your life.  
I'll show you how to take a real rest.  
Walk with me and work with me.  
Watch how I do it.  
Learn the unforced rhythm of grace.  
I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you.  
Keep company, and you'll learn to live freely in life.

— *Matthew 11:28–30 (The Message)*

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## Homily

What an amazing invitation from God. I've read this text many times in my own faith journey, and there's been times when I'm like, "I don't know what I'm doing wrong. This doesn't seem very light."

But then I realized that God doesn't say that the journeys will get any lighter, but he does say that he will come beside us and walk with us to lighten the journey, to be there, to be our partner in the journey.

When you think about a yoke for an ox, it puts two oxen together to do their work. Now, it requires that each ox go in the same direction, that each ox—one doesn't pull off that way or one doesn't pull off that way. They need to go together.

And I think for my own life, when the journey gets difficult and I don't feel the yoke of Christ making the burden lighter, it's because I've gone off on my own way. I don't know if that's perhaps how you all feel.

But I thought it was important today that we are reminded that this interim, intentional interim journey that you are embarking on—we don't go on this journey alone. We go on this journey yoked to Christ.

While it might seem that this journey has been long, and perhaps some of you are wondering:

- Will this journey ever end?
- Will there ever be another congregationally called pastor in the pulpit and behind the altar?
- What is God up to?
- Does God not love us anymore?

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All of these questions might be in your mind as we begin this journey. But this text invites us to remember that we don't go on this journey alone. We go on this journey yoked, connected to Christ.

There was a time the reason for clergy to wear stoles is to remind us that we are yoked to Christ. So I hope as we look at these images of the mere and the sick that we will remind that you are not walking this journey alone, that I am yoked with you to guide you, to invite you into reflection, to invite you into this process, into this discernment of how God is calling you into the next part of your life.

And it's not just me that is on the journey with you. It is God. God who makes this promise:

"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."

I know at times, even as I've begun to talk with you and try to discern how we move forward, this burden seems really heavy. I can see your council president acknowledging it with smiles.

But I promise you, I promise you that God will help us carry this burden to a point of discernment, to a point where you will be ready to call your next pastor who will come and lead you into that next part of your mission and ministry.

I pray that you stay faithful, that you hang in during this process, that you allow yourself to be fully invested in the process, knowing that we walk together, but we walk also with the Holy Spirit.

May the Holy Spirit fill us with the power to do this work.