

- I try to get up extra early these mornings to take a morning walk and get some exercise. It's much cooler on summer mornings so getting out early is important.
- But there is another reason I have been getting up and out early – there are a lot less people out at about at 6am. I find myself looking for that empty street to walk down; crossing to the other side when I see someone coming toward me on my side of the street (especially if they are not wearing a mask!)
- I'm starting to view people as obstacles to maneuver around; starting to see people as things to avoid. This is not a good thing. I don't like it!! I find myself getting annoyed and angry more and more.
- I need a way to love my neighbor and yet be safe; I need a way to negotiate being safe and being Christian.
- As Christians we are called to love and care for each other – we are called to be community. How do we do this behind a facemask and/or six feet away from each other? How do we stay Christian when we are getting too comfortable avoiding each other?
- We really can't do it alone. But the good news is we don't have to.
- Today's Gospel reading provides us with a beautiful reminder. Listen to the words again: “ *Come to me all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me for I am meek and humble of heart and you will find rest for yourselves. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light*”.
- Jesus loves to use images to drive home His point. A “yoke” is a wooden cross beam fit between two animals (usually oxen) to attach them to each other in order to help them work in unison. This allows them to combine their strength and carry heavy loads.
- In this beautiful passage Jesus invites us to attach ourselves to Him. He reminds us we are not alone. God journeys with us, participates in our lives. Jesus tells us: I am here. Count on me to help you carry that heavy load- whatever it is that burdens you. Let's do this together; it will be much easier.
- In this comforting passage Jesus assures us we can still love others despite the obstacles' despite the fear and anxiety and separation

this pandemic has imposed upon us. We can still be Christian. How? By putting on His yoke. And to put on His yoke means to let Him into our lives, learn from Him, lean on Him, follow His examples and move in the direction He pulls.

- It starts with prayer. When you are afraid, or tired or burdened. When you begin to see others as obstacles and things to avoid – ask the Lord for the grace, the strength to see it differently.
- In this Gospel passage Jesus stresses two things we need to learn to negotiate this difficult time and remain Christian.
- He tells us learn to be “meek and humble “: like He is. If we are open, He will teach us how.
- Being “meek and humble” is not being weak and afraid. It is not always being quiet and passive, it means being active.
- Meek and humble means realizing everything and everyone is a gift from God. Seeing others as a place where God dwells.
- It means being amazed at God’s love and God’s wonderful works.
- Being meek and humble means entering into loving relationships; allowing yourself to care deeply for others; allowing yourself to feel the pain of others – not letting fear stop you from being God’s love in the world.
- We can do this even under the difficult conditions of today’s world. We can speak kind, encouraging words from behind that mask. We can listen to and reassure others. We can be a source of comfort, bring a sense of peace and hope – let others know God is present when we are present (even if six feet away or behind some plastic barrier). As St. Paul reminds us in our second reading the spirit is far greater, far more powerful than the flesh. We must dig down deep and let our spirit lead us.
- If we take on Jesus attitude of humbleness and meekness things will get less burdensome because we will look at things differently. We will get a special peace; that restfulness Jesus assures us. We need to remember we are not alone - He is beside us (remember the yoke!!).

God bless you.