

**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 your selves. For my yoke is easy, and my burden light.**

- Matthew 11

## Fifteenth Week of Ordinary Time: July 13-19, 2008

### The Fifteenth Week of Ordinary Time

**The Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time** is about God's fidelity. The promise of **Isaiah 55** and Parable of the Sower from **Matthew's Gospel** remind us that no matter what obstacles we face as his disciples, as sowers of the Good News, God will work effectively through us. "But the seed sown on rich soil is the one who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and yields a hundred or sixty or thirty fold."

Tuesday we remember **Saint Bonaventure, bishop and doctor.**

This week, the first readings are from the **Book of the Prophet Isaiah**. The preaching of the first part of Isaiah contains powerful words about the infidelity of the people and the kings, God's sanctions so as to purify a people who would be faithful. On Saturday, we begin reading from the **Book of the Prophet Micah**.

In our readings from **Matthew's Gospel** we read more about the challenge of being a disciple of Jesus. He calls us to a bond with him that is even greater than the bonds of family. "Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it." Jesus reproaches towns where he worked miracles and the people had not repented. Jesus thanks God that, though the wise and the learned remain in unbelief, the childlike are open to God's grace and believe. Jesus says, "Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest." Taking on discipleship we will find that it is easy and we will find rest in him. When controversy comes up about his disciples' picking grain to eat on the Sabbath, Jesus give a startling response to the judgment of the Pharisees: "I desire mercy, not sacrifice." Jesus leaves town

### Daily Prayer This Week

This week, we are invited to place our trust in God as we respond more and more deeply to the invitation of Jesus to be his disciples. Being his disciple means being connected with him with a bond stronger than any other bond in our life. It may set us at odds with others. Seeking self fulfillment will always be frustrating and unattainable. Letting go of ourselves for Jesus' sake brings a fulfillment beyond our imagining. It is not enough to be part of a wonderful family or outstanding parish community. We need to repent ourselves and make our own commitment. Being smart and clever are not what is required of us. Jesus asks us to be childlike, that is, trusting, dependent, open to learn and receive. Being his disciples means that we come to Jesus in all our needs, especially for the resources we need to serve him. It is as companions of Jesus' own mission that the burden of our mission will become lighter and quite easy. Coming to Jesus will bring refreshment and peace. A sign of our discipleship will never be self righteousness and judgmental of others. What he desires is that our hearts become like his: full of mercy and love. His own heart is moved with pity for those who are wandering, without direction, as though shepherd-less.

How can we find intimacy with God in the midst of our busy lives, while reflecting on our discipleship? By letting these precious messages of Jesus to us settle into our hearts. If we really hear them, they will become a part of us this week. It doesn't take much time. It takes a focus. Each day, we can let these words of Jesus interact with what is going on in our daily lives. For example, the call to be bonded with him might strike a chord in our hearts. That is, I might recognize that my bond with Jesus is weak, and I recognize a desire for a deeper bond. Or, I might be challenged by the invitation to let go of my need for self fulfillment in order to really find real meaning in life and the true self within me.

when the Pharisees want to kill him to fulfill the Prophet Isaiah: "He will not contend or cry out, nor will anyone hear his voice in the streets. A bruised reed he will not break, a smoldering wick he will not quench, until he brings justice to victory."

This **Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time** we are reminded that God has sown good seed, but, of course, an enemy has sown weeds in the same field. We are not supposed to go out there judgmentally pulling up weeds, but to leave judgment to God. The way the Kingdom of God grows is the way tiny seeds grow and the way yeast makes dough rise: it is surprising and slow and almost imperceptible. If we have ears, we ought to hear.

Perhaps I might feel the call to repent or to be more trusting and childlike or to be less judgmental and more merciful as particularly addressed to me.

All we need to do is to begin each day simply naming these desires that the readings reveal in us. Then, throughout the day, in the in-between times - dressing, driving, walking from one place to another, finding myself alone here or there - I can have brief conversations with the Lord asking for these graces. In particularly difficult times, or in times when my weakness reveal themselves to me, I can recognize the desire more deeply and express that to the Lord, growing in gratitude for the intimacy and grace I am experiencing each day.