

WEDNESDAY OF THE SECOND WEEK OF ADVENT

DECEMBER 11TH, 2024

Gospel

Matthew 11:28-30

Reflection

You probably don't regularly find yourself surrounded by cattle, so you might not know that a yoke is a wooden beam used between a pair of animals to pull them together at the same time. In today's Gospel, when Jesus invites us to take His yoke upon us and learn from Him, He's inviting us to walk beside Him, to take on what He takes on, so that we might find rest for ourselves.

We must consider, then, what exactly Jesus takes on: ultimately, He takes on the cross. The easy yoke and the light burden that He invites us to is the cross. This is madness, right? Yet, Christ calls us to this. If we want to truly follow Him through it all, we will follow Him through His Passion and

Death so that we can have new life in Him.

The madness of it all, though, isn't that this is what Christ calls us to. It's that, when we truly embrace suffering as a means to be made holy and near to Christ, we truly do find rest and the burden is light.

This rest is not as the world understands it, but a supernatural rest that we find when we give our lives over to Christ. It's found when we pick up our crosses with love. When we do this, the weight of them doesn't go away, but we find ourselves beside Christ, able to bear the weight because we are beside Him, suffering with Him, that we might rise with Him.

Today's Challenge

Look at the cross, and ask Jesus for the grace to take His yoke upon yourself. Ask Him for the grace to learn from Him, to become like Him, that you might find rest for yourself.

FEAST OF OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE

DECEMBER 12TH, 2024

Gospel

Luke 1:26-38 or Luke 1:39-47

Reflection

Our world loves the “possible.” It loves the things we can figure out and understand, the possibilities that exist when we engage in scientific exploration or inquiry. A writer looks at a blank page but sees the possibility of the next great book. A songwriter plays the first few chords of a song that doesn’t sound like much, but they hear it as the next hit single. Possibilities, though there may be many, are also limited. Any writer or singer knows the doubt that exists when they feel like they cannot create any further. People are only so creative. Science can only tell us so much. Possibilities are limited.

For God, though, there is no limit. After the

original sin of Adam and Eve, it seemed that humanity was condemned to death, that life was no longer possible. But not for God; God promises life and a redeemer. Enter Mary, who on the outside appears to be an unlikely choice to bear this Savior. She is a virgin, yet God expands what is possible for her, and she conceives a child. Her cousin Elizabeth also conceives, despite her old age, the person who will herald the coming of Christ, John the Baptist. God makes incredible realities and possibilities where it seemed none existed.

This may be the most striking line in the Gospel today: “For with God nothing will be impossible.” **(Luke 1:37)** Note the important word here: will.

The angel speaks in a future tense. Despite the impossible things God just did in the lives of Mary and Elizabeth, God still has more. There is still death and resurrection, healing, and a Church that proclaims freedom.

And then there is your life. Nothing will be impossible for God, even when we feel it is impossible. Even when we feel the doors are closed. Even if all other options are off the table. God has something more. Like Mary, we only need

to be open to the realm of radical possibilities that are known only to God and prepare for the journey they will lead us on.

Today's Challenge

On this feast day of Our Lady of Guadalupe, we celebrate the gift that Mary is and always has been to us. Her prayerful intercession is more powerful than we can comprehend and it brings miraculous change. After the Blessed Virgin's appearances in Guadalupe, Mexico in the 16th century, literally millions of souls throughout Mexico and Latin America converted from paganism to Catholicism. Pray a Rosary today for all those who suffer from doubt that God truly can accomplish the impossible.

MEMORIAL OF ST. LUCY, VIRGIN AND MARTYR DECEMBER 13TH, 2024

Gospel

Matthew 11:16-19

Reflection

Have you ever participated in one of those terrifying "team building activities" that require you to be blindfolded and "totally trust" your leader? It's not an easy activity as you struggle to navigate without your most prized sense of sight available to you. This uncomfortable physical blindness we experience is similar to the spiritual blindness we may encounter in our day-to-day lives.

In today's Gospel, the children Jesus talks about are like us. Their selfish desire to be entertained prohibited them from seeing the truth. Sometimes this is what keeps us from the love of the Father. We fail to recognize the person in front of us, and