

Jesus addresses us with comforting words today: "Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest." Let those words wash over us and all the responsibilities we have, all the stresses we're under, and all the failures that haunt us. "My yoke is easy," Jesus assures us, "my burden light." As we gather together on this holiday weekend, let us rejoice in the freedom Jesus offers us from our heavy burdens.

As we gather together let us begin our service by professing what we believe.

*Profession of Faith: Page 102*

I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible. I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages. God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father; through him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven, (bow as we say) and by the Holy Spirit he was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, he suffered death and was buried, and rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church. I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

*Introductory Rite:*

*Greeting:*

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed be God for ever.

**Blessed be God for ever.**

*Penitential Rite:*

My brothers and sisters, to prepare ourselves for this celebration, let us call to mind our sins.

Lord Jesus, you died to sin once and for all: Lord, have mercy.

**Lord, have mercy.**

Lord Jesus, you were raised from the dead by the glory of the Father: Christ, have mercy.

**Christ, have mercy.**

Lord Jesus, you are the way that leads to everlasting life: Lord, have mercy.

**Lord, have mercy.**

May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive our sins, and bring us to everlasting life. **Amen.**

*Opening Prayer:*

O God, who in the abasement of your Son have raised up a fallen world, fill your faithful with holy joy, for on those you have rescued from slavery to sin you bestow eternal gladness.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

*Liturgy of the Word:*

*First Reading Page 80*

A reading from the Book of Zechariah

*Zechariah 9:9-10*

Thus says the LORD: Rejoice heartily, O daughter Zion, shout for joy, O daughter Jerusalem!

See, your king shall come to you; a just savior is he, meek, and riding on an ass, on a colt, the foal of an ass.

He shall banish the chariot from Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem; the warrior's bow shall be banished, and he shall proclaim peace to the nations. His dominion shall be from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth.

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God**

6. Responsorial Song*Psalm 145:1-2, 8-9, 10-11, 13-14*

R/. I will praise your name for ever, my king and my God. **R/. I will praise your name for ever, my king and my God.**

I will extol you, O my God and King, and I will bless your name forever and ever.  
Every day will I bless you, and I will praise your name forever and ever. **R/.**

The LORD is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and of great kindness.  
The LORD is good to all and compassionate toward all his works. **R/.**

Let all your works give you thanks, O LORD, and let your faithful ones bless you.  
Let them discourse of the glory of your kingdom and speak of your might. **R/.**

The LORD is faithful in all his words and holy in all his works.  
The LORD lifts up all who are falling and raises up all who are bowed down. **R/.**

7. Second Reading

A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Romans

*Romans 8:9, 11-13*

Brothers and sisters: You are not in the flesh; on the contrary, you are in the spirit, if only the Spirit of God dwells in you. Whoever does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. If the Spirit of the one who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, the one who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also, through his Spirit that dwells in you. Consequently, brothers and sisters, we are not debtors to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. For if you live according to the flesh, you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

8. Gospel

*Matthew 11:25-30*

The Lord be with you

**And also with you.**

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew

**Glory to you, Lord**

At that time Jesus exclaimed: "I give praise to you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, for although you have hidden these things from the wise and the learned you have revealed them to little ones. Yes, Father, such has been your gracious will. All things have been handed over to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son wishes to reveal him."

"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 light."

The Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

Reflection on the Word:

Our expectations often fool us. Zechariah realized this. It's only natural to expect that a king would ride in on horse and chariot. On a beast of burden without a weapon? Preposterous. Yet that is how the "just savior" brings peace. In the Gospel, Jesus says God has revealed to little ones what has been hidden from the wise and the learned. To recognize Jesus as the Messiah, one had to be open to the possibility of a king who acted like a servant. Those who insisted they already had all the answers (e.g. the scribes and the Pharisees) refused to accept him.

Yokes are uncommon today, but in the days before tractors and other power machinery strong animals had to pull farm equipment across the field. To drag the plow through heavy soil and keep it headed in a straight line, animals usually worked in pairs, attached with a yoke. The animals walked at a sustainable pace, supporting each other when one tired or encountered an obstacle. With a yoke, each animal needed to do only half the work. Jesus offers us similar support. By sharing in our hardships, he lightens our burden and gives us some rest. We are not going it alone.

We have some responsibility in having our burden eased. We need to stand up and take the yoke. "Take my yoke upon you and learn from me," Jesus tells his audience (Matthew 11:29). We need to turn to the Lord and we need to listen and learn. We need to ask what the Lord is calling us to do and be willing to accept that. In doing so we will realize that Jesus will always be there to help us.

**Question of the Week:** When have I realized that my expectations had fooled me? Regarding hardships, what have I learned from asking for help?

Prayer of the Faithful:

Let us come before God with our needs and our burdens, for we are promised that they will be lightened.

- For Christians around the world who are suffering from persecution, that they be kept safe from harm, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
- That peace may be proclaimed in our country, both within and without, as we celebrate the anniversary of our independence this weekend, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
- That the prosperity of our country may reach the poorest among us so that the burden of poverty may be lightened for all, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
- For those suffering from drug addiction, and for their families and loved ones, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
- For all of us, that we may come to the assistance of others in need, helping to make their yoke easy and their burden light, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
- For all the prayers that we hold in the silence of our hearts; for all our intentions spoken and unspoken, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Our king and our God, you are gracious and merciful, good to all and compassionate toward all you have created. Listen to the prayers we make and lighten our burdens through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Communion RiteThe Lord's Prayer: Page 134

Let us pray with confidence to the Father in the words our Savior gave us.

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.**

**Rite of Peace:**

The sign of peace outwardly expresses a deep spiritual reality; through this sign we acknowledge Christ's presence in each other and share the peace we have received from Him. Let us offer each other the sign of peace.

Let us offer each other the sign of peace.

**Communion:**

Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

**Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.**

The body of Christ. **Amen.**

**Prayer after Communion:**

Grant us, we pray, O Lord, that, having been replenished by such great gifts, we may gain the prize of salvation and never cease to praise you.

Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

**Concluding Rite:****Final Blessing:**

May the Lord bless us,  protect us from all evil and bring us to everlasting life. **Amen.**

Go in the peace of Christ! **Thanks be to God.**