

'Come to me, all you who labour and are burdened,
and I will give you rest.' (Mt. 11:28)

You who labour and are burdened: those words bring to mind images of all kinds of people - men and women, young and old - who are weighed down as they journey through life, hoping one day to free themselves from their burdens.

In this part of St Matthew's Gospel, Jesus extends an invitation: '*Come to me...*' A crowd had gathered to see and hear him. Many were simple, poor people with little education, who couldn't understand and follow the complex religious obligations of their time. To this was added taxes to be paid and the burden of Roman rule, which made life almost impossible. They were struggling and hoping to find a better life.

Through his teachings, Jesus showed particular concern for people who were marginalized and seen as sinners by society. He wanted everyone to understand and accept the most important law, the one that opens the door to the Father's house, the law of love. In fact, God reveals his wonders to those with open and simple hearts.

Today, too, Jesus invites us to come closer to him. He revealed himself as the visible presence of a God who is love, a God who loves us immensely just as we are, with our talents and limitations, our hopes and failures! He invites us to trust in his law which is not a burden weighing us down, but rather a yoke that is light and gives joy to the hearts of those who live it. Our commitment is to avoid turning in on ourselves and to make our life become an ever-fuller gift to others, day after day.

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Jesus also makes a promise: '*...I will give you rest.*'

How will he give us rest? First through His presence, that grows deeper and stronger within us if we choose him as the cornerstone of our whole life. Secondly, through his light that shines on our path each day and helps us discover life's meaning, even in difficult circumstances. If we then start loving as Jesus did, we will find that love gives us the strength to go ahead and the fullness of freedom. This is because God's life grows within us.

Chiara Lubich wrote, '*... Unless Christians are constantly striving to love, they don't deserve the name Christian. This is because all Jesus' commandments are summed up in one: love of God and love of neighbour in whom we recognize and love Jesus. Love is not just a matter of feelings. Beginning from little things and humble acts of service, love needs to be shown concretely by serving our brothers and sisters, especially those who are close to us. Charles de Foucauld once said: "When you love someone, you are really in that person through love, you live in that person through love, you no longer live in yourself, you are 'detached' from yourself, 'outside' of yourself" Through this love, Jesus' light grows within us as he promised: "To those who love me... I will reveal myself." Love is a source of light. By loving, we understand God better, God who is Love.*'

So, let's accept Jesus' invitation to go to Him, knowing He is the source of our hope and our peace.

Let's accept his 'commandment' and strive to love as He did. We have endless opportunities to do this throughout the day, in our families, in the parish and at work.

Let's build bridges rather than walls, by putting ourselves at the service of those weighed down by life's difficulties.

Far from being a burden, we will discover that this law gives us wings to soar higher and higher.

Letizia Magri