

## 14th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A

### GOSPEL

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Jesus exclaimed, 'I bless you, Father, Lord of heaven and of earth, for hiding these things from the learned and the clever and revealing them to mere children. Yes, Father, for that is what it pleased you to do. Everything has been entrusted to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, just as no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

'Come to me, all you who labour and are overburdened, and I will give you rest. Shoulder my yoke and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. Yes, my yoke is easy and my burden light.'

(Matthew 11:25-30)

### DID YOU KNOW?

Points of interest and Catholic lore

- The prayer of blessing that Jesus makes in this gospel is known as a *berakah*—the basis of Jewish prayers of praise and thanksgiving. In our liturgy, we use the *berakah* form just before the eucharistic prayer: 'Blessed are you, Lord God of all creation. Through your goodness we have this bread and wine to offer.' To which we all respond, 'Blessed be God forever.'
- A yoke is a piece of agricultural equipment that went around the neck of an ox. It is attached to a plough or a cart, which the ox drags along. This method is still used in many parts of the world. The yoke takes the burden of the load that the oxen must pull. It is heavy work.

### EXPLORING THE WORD

Matthew's community must have been deeply troubled by the fact that the 'learned and clever' religious leaders of the day did not accept the message of Jesus. Surely they, of all people, should have been in a position to recognise the truth. But in this passage, Matthew explains that it is not from a position of knowledge or power that one recognises the truth; rather it is from an attitude of openness and simplicity.

Jesus' intimate address of *Abba* ('Father') is used five times. This intimate relationship is characterised by God's entrusting all things to the Son, and the Son in turn revealing them to those who have faith. Jesus is the perfect teacher, describing himself as gentle and humble in heart.

There is an interesting contrast here between the burden of following the restrictive laws of the Pharisees and the 'easy burden' of faith in Christ. The rules and laws of the Pharisees often added to the burden experienced by people of the day, while Jesus tried to lift the burden from people.

- In your journey to faith, are there aspects that you find 'burdensome'? What are they? This could be an opportunity to discuss some difficult beliefs of the Church.
- Do you have a sense of having been 'entrusted' with the truth? Discuss this idea. What has been revealed to you so far?

### MAKING CONNECTIONS

Opportunities for group discussion and personal prayer

- Can you tell of an occasion when you felt God near? Where have you experienced God's presence? Where do you find your rest? Share your reflections.
- In your life, within your family or workplace, do you know someone who is burdened and weighed down by cares and concerns? Can you find ways to ease that burden this week?
- Be 'life-giving' to others this week. Acknowledge and affirm them in particular ways.
- Pray the blessing from the first verse of Psalm 144 throughout the week.

*I will give you glory, O God, my king.*

*I will bless your name forever.*

*I will bless you day after day*

