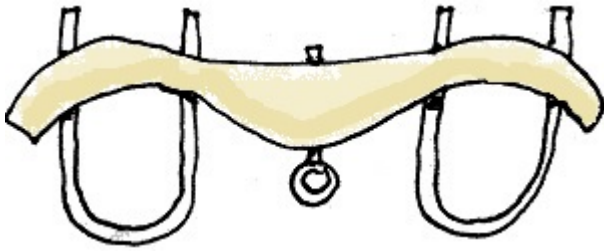


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by Pat Marrin

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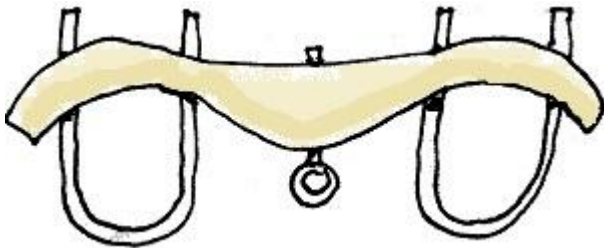
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July 17, 2019

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“My yoke is easy and my burden light” (Matt 11:30).

One wonders if Jesus’ famous promise that discipleship would be easy and light wasn’t an inside joke among the early missionaries. What did St. Paul think about the sweet yoke of Christ as he endured shipwreck, imprisonment and beatings? In today’s continuation of the call of Moses in Exodus 3, did God wink at Moses when he reassured him that his return to Egypt to confront Pharaoh would be successful?

Moses had fled Egypt as a murderer and a rebel within the royal family. He was comfortably settled in Midian, married and shepherding his father-in-law's flocks. Going home to Egypt was the last thing on his mind. The last thing, that is, until he encountered I AM in the burning bush. God reveals Moses' destiny. This is what he was born for, why he was rescued from the river and adopted into Pharaoh's household. If he does not fulfill his destiny he will lose his identity and life's purpose. The one burden Moses must take up and the one path that is opening up before him naturally, supported by grace and harmony, is the life he was meant to live.

This is the secret of Jesus's promise to every disciple. If you get in the harness with me and take up your cross and follow me, you will find fulfillment and joy. This is who you really are.

St. Paul was also asked to do very difficult things when he was called by Jesus. But Paul came to understand what Jesus asked him on the road to Damascus: "Saul, why are you kicking against the goads?" (Acts 26:14). It is the same image from today's Gospel, about oxen in harness who resist the sharp sticks that kept them pulling together.

In fact, Paul's many burdens and challenges became his joy, because this was his destiny, the fulfillment of his call from the womb to be the Apostle to the Gentiles. Everything else he counted as loss compared to the joy of having Christ. He had to preach the Gospel because this was his life.

We should ask ourselves, what life do I really want? What work would I do without pay, for the joy of using my gifts, the satisfaction of being myself? Isn't this the secret of my vocation, rather than living and doing what does not satisfy me, trying to be someone I am not, wearing a mask, pretending to live?

Jesus invites everyone who is burdened this way to find rest in him. Accompany me and you will find yourself and be at peace.

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