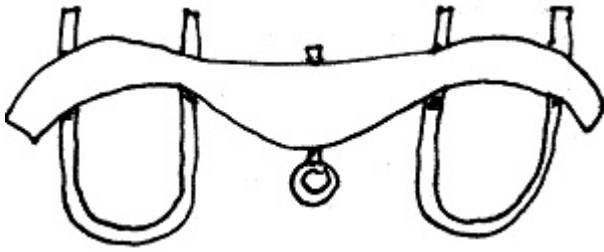


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by Pat Marrin

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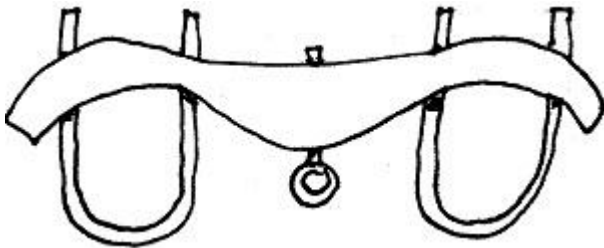
patrickjmarrin@gmail.com.

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

Isaiah 40:25-31; Matthew 11:28-30

Longshoreman philosopher and writer Eric Hoffer (1898-1983), once described how veteran dockworkers knew how to shift the weight of a load to their young partners to make their own work lighter. In today’s Gospel, Jesus offers to share our burdens evenly if we are willing to step into the harness with him. The image of the yoke is

about distributing the load so that both partners divide their effort and double their sense of shared purpose and companionship.

Isaiah the prophet also affirms that God strengthens those who partner with the divine. To be in sync with our Creator is to be aligned with our true nature. If we think, feel and act according to the divine will we are going with flow instead of frustrating it. “They that hope in the Lord will renew their strength, they will soar with eagles’ wings.” Eagles soar effortlessly because they know how to ride the wind currents.

We all can identify with Jesus’ invitation: “Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened.” Every life has its sufferings, struggles and frustrations. We go to bed worrying about tomorrow and wake up to put on the many harnesses of life: our jobs, responsibilities and family problems, the pressures of earning enough to make ends meet, anxieties about health, our children and the general state of society and the world.

Jesus does not promise to take away our burdens, only to be with us in every aspect of our humanity. He is one of us, a fellow human being who experienced every kind of human challenge and loss, including rejection, loneliness and even a violent death. There is no human experience he cannot identify with. He understands our lives from the inside out and at every stage and circumstance.

So, his offer of rest is about walking with us, listening to us and helping us to know the same peace he found in communing with his Father, even in the midst of great suffering. Because he was fully human, he can show us the way through any crisis or tragedy, how to remain hopeful when others despair, faithful when others turn away.

“Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart; and you will find rest for yourselves.”

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