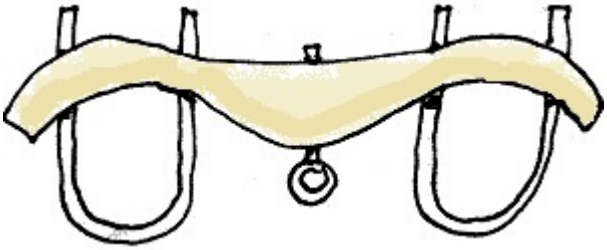
Spirituality
Pencil Preaching





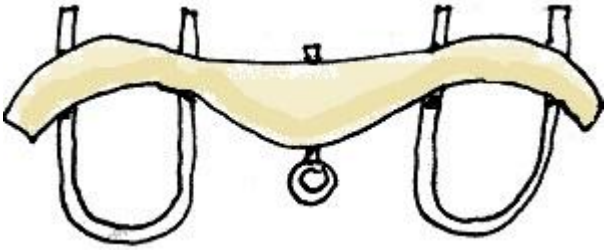
by Pat Marrin

View Author Profile
patrickjmarrin@gmail.com.

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

Isa 26:7-9, 12, 16-19; Matt 11:28-30.

One of the wonders of the human body is its symmetry. Evolution seems to have prepared humans to walk upright by giving the human body a centerline spine and distributing weight side to side and front to back. Binary structure balances two arms, legs, eyes and ears to enable graceful movement in every direction. The

Greeks celebrated bodily strength and beauty in the Olympics and in statuary, and Leonardo da Vinci revealed the underlying proportions of the ideal body in his famous circular diagram, *Vitruvian Man.*

In today's Gospel, Jesus addresses the demands life places on human beings as the burdens of labor, inviting those who are weary to come to him to find rest. He also celebrates a kind of inner symmetry and balance by suggesting that a life can also be effortless when shared. By the Incarnation, Jesus took up the burden being human, but revealed the agility and beauty that grace affords those who live naturally and in balance. Virtue offers a lifestyle between extremes, the secret of moderation in all things.

Jesus lived a strenuous and demanding life, evidenced by his journeying on foot up and down the length of the hilly country roads, his busy ministry among the throngs of people attracted to his teaching, and the unrelenting stress of conflict with his critics right up to the day of his arrest, torture and death. Yet, he describes his yoke as easy and his burden light. The secret of his approach to life was that he was "meek and humble of heart." He was at peace with himself and with the earth he walked, sustained by its inner unity and in particular by its offer of community.

Ultimately, even the perfect man is incomplete if he remains alone. Our bodies are complementary, designed to be interdependent physically and socially. We exist in community, take our identity from our relationships, find life in family units, complete each other by contributing different gifts to a whole that is larger than any one individual. Those who isolate or elevate themselves as self-made and sufficient soon discover how burdensome life alone can be.

Here is the secret: Come into the harness, the yoke that binds us together in common purpose and shared energy. Stop trying so hard to be better than others, unique, special; instead be meek and humble of heart. Let your gift be part of the gifts of others. Let your strengths and weaknesses blend with those of others to create the web of mutual love and forgiveness that will carry everyone in times of need and times of plenty. This is what Jesus offers us: "Learn from me." His Incarnation, and everything he learned from his life and death in this world, adds divine nature to our human lives and teaches us how to become the beloved community that is the image of God on earth.

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