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UNIVERSITÀ
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Istituto di Antropologia



Retreat 8 – 10.12.2025

Meditation on Matthew 11:28-30

It is a strikingly short passage from the Gospel today, and this brevity seems to correspond exactly to what this passage is about. Basically, it is about a common experience. Everyday work and the challenges associated with it, the whole of everyday life, simply everything becomes too much. You don't know what to do, and you long for peace, relief and some distance. This can also and especially happen with people who focus on the topics of abuse, coming to terms with abuse, and prevention. They are also among those "who labour and are heavy laden" (Matthew 11:28).

Dealing with the deeds of those who abuse, the suffering of those affected by abuse, the failure of the church to deal with abuse appropriately, the tough struggle within the church over the relationship between justice and mercy, the pressure from the public on the church and its representatives and much more can wear you down. Questions arise, such as "Does my work have any meaning at all?" "How am I supposed to manage it all?"

How comforting it is to read in today's Gospel: "I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28). How exactly this rest can be achieved is explained in the following verse: "Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me" (Matthew 11:29). At first glance, it seems a little strange to many that a yoke is supposed to bring relief and rest. After all, a yoke puts pressure on the neck, restricting room for manoeuvre, freedom, and making you work even harder. That may all be the case, and you can see it that way. But that's only half the truth. A yoke also makes work much easier. Heavy loads can be pulled more easily, the work to be done can be coordinated with others, and it more or less prevents you from getting off track because the yoke can improve guidance. When Jesus speaks figuratively of his yoke, it is ultimately about accepting his guidance and being in harmony with Him. This is particularly essential for us Christians, who want to follow Him and become like Him. Seen in this way, his yoke is really not a burden, but a help and support. He is not concerned with arbitrary oppression, unlike many rulers of this world. He is "gentle and lowly in heart" (Matthew 11:29). His yoke is therefore also "easy" (Matthew 11:30). It does not alienate us from ourselves, but leads us in Jesus' discipleship to become who we want to be.

To accept the yoke, the guidance of Jesus, we must be willing to listen to His word, seek His will, and speak to Him in prayer. This demands time, peace, and focus. In daily life, it involves occasionally breaking routines to avoid getting lost in worries and tasks. Only then can we regain clarity, keep our sense of direction, and find renewed motivation to proceed along the

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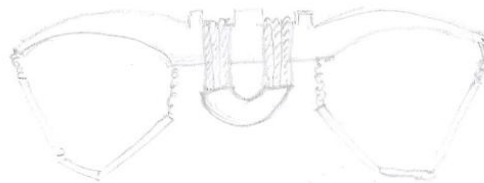
chosen path. Regarding commitment as a Safeguarder, this means regularly reconnecting with Jesus Christ through prayer, meditation, scripture reading, worship, and living spirituality itself. It's about becoming one with Him, who stood up for vulnerable people, those little recognised, the injured and wounded, sharing His life with them.

Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ, you withdrew into the silence of prayer time and again in the fulfilment of your mission. Let us learn from you and from your example so that we do not lose sight of the reason and the goal of our actions.

Question

How can I take care of myself, and who can help me so that I don't become bitter, demotivated and discouraged in the long term when dealing with the issue of abuse?



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