

FROM THE PASTOR'S PRINTER

IS THAT A NEW CHALICE?

You may have noticed at Mass last Sunday that the chalice we regularly use, which is the chalice I received at ordination was replaced with a different chalice. This is because the regular chalice is being replaced. The chalice we are using right now belongs to a good friend of Fr. Dorrman's, Fr. Steve Emerick, who happened to be the assistant pastor when I was a mere lad and server for his Masses at St. Vivian. To use his chalice is an honor because Fr. Emerick was very instrumental in encouraging me to become a priest. I pray for him when I celebrate Mass with his chalice. Sad to say, after more than fifty years, Fr. Emerick's chalice is in better shape than I am!

IS THE YOKE REALLY THAT EASY & IS THE BURDEN REALLY THAT LIGHT?

The words of Jesus in today's Gospel (Mt 11: 28-29) are words we often hear at funerals and at times of crisis. "Come to me, all you who labor and are heavy burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon your shoulders and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble of heart. For my yoke is easy and my burden light." We put our trust in these words, and yet we often find that the crisis still exists, and the grief is not lifted like a clearing sky on a gloomy day. To understand these words let's look at the meaning of Jesus' words. To understand what Jesus means we must look at the context in which he speaks them. First, we need to realize that the image of the yoke for Jews was not simply a weight on one's shoulders in addition to the labor that the yoke bearer was to do. For

faithful Jews, the image of the yoke represented the Law of God, which was the way of true wisdom. True wisdom was not simply in the mind, but how one lived one's life. A good yoke worn by a work animal is fitted so that it does not chafe so that the animal can function well; a yoke served to direct the animal in its work. True wisdom is a yoke that does not chafe and gives direction in life.

Unfortunately, the Law of God in the Old Testament for many people degraded from being a way that did not fit life, that imposed heavy manmade burdens on people. Instead of the Law being a way to live in relationship with the loving God, it became a burden to prove that one was worthy of God's love. The yoke no longer fit the work; it chafed, it bruised, it was a burden beyond the ability to carry. The Pharisees especially saw Jewish faith as convoluted rules and easy infractions. Jesus does not call his followers to prove they are worthy of God's love (none are); rather he gives us divine love because God loves us; he calls us to follow his law of love and the other commandments because that is the way to live in the love he gives us. He understands human failure and always calls us back to life. This does not mean that Christian life is easy. The gospels and epistles are filled with the words of Christ about bearing our crosses, about dying to self to live in Christ, about surrendering to God's will. What makes Jesus' yoke easy and his burden light is not that he takes away all our troubles, but he gives us the wisdom to be able to know how to "work

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smart” and make the work of the gospel easier, and he, through his grace and his presence (often in the people around us) help us bear the burden.

This promise of Jesus isn't simple a promise to make life easy. It is about being able to face life and the burdens of life with the strength of God, to confront them with the knowledge that Christ is there for us, seen or unseen. All we need to do is turn to him and surrender ourselves to him. This, of course, is easier said than done. We journey towards the Lord, growing in insight and trust; none of us automatically have those virtues, except as a gift from the Lord. When life is overwhelming and it is hard to see goodness, strength, and grace, remember Jesus did not promise that we would not have a burden; but that he would be with us to bear it. Often, we cannot see His presence and action in the moment, but upon reflection we find that he was there, and we bore the burden with his help, and we are all the better for it.

WORDS TO THE WISE, THE MARRIED WISE, THAT IS

There is a well-known seafood restaurant in Charleston, SC called Hyman's Seafood Restaurant. Hundreds of famous people have eaten there, and the tables are marked with the names of the famous people who sat there. (I have yet to find my name; I am sure it is an oversight.) I mention it because on the tables are business cards with words of humor and advice. One of the cards is *40 Promises for Marriage* by Steve Stephens. I think it contains a great deal of common sense.

If You are already married, it is not too late to put them into practice!

1. Start each day with a kiss.
2. Wear your wedding ring at all times.
3. Date once a week.
4. Accept differences.
5. Be polite.
6. Give gifts.
7. Smile often.
8. Touch.
9. Give back rubs.
10. Laugh together.
11. Send a card for no reason.
12. Do what the other person wants before he or she asks.
13. Listen.
14. Encourage.
15. Know his or her needs.
16. Fix the other person's breakfast.
17. Compliment twice a day.
18. Call during the day.
19. Slow down.
20. Hold hands
21. Cuddle
22. Ask for the other's opinion
23. Show respect
24. Look your best
25. Celebrate birthdays in a big way.
26. Apologize
27. Forgive
28. Set up a romantic getaway.
29. Be positive.
30. Be kind.
31. Be vulnerable.
32. Respond quickly to the other persons request.
33. Reminisce about your favorite times together.
34. Treat each other's friends and relatives with courtesy.
35. Send flowers every Valentine's Day and anniversary
36. Admit when wrong
37. Be sensitive to each other's sexual desires.
38. Pray for each other daily.
39. Say "I love you" frequently.
40. Seek outside help when needed.

Have a blessed week. – Fr. Jeff