

In spite of the fact that our technology
allows us to be in instant communication with each other at any time,
wherever we may be,
we live in an age of increasing personal isolation.
It's curious, is it not,
that the more we are able to "reach out and touch someone,"
the more we are becoming out of touch with family and friends.
Perhaps its because electronic communication
is slowly but surely replacing personal communication
and isolation is the price we are paying for the convenience of it all.

How good it is, then, to find again in today's scripture
this warm, personal communication, this invitation from Jesus:
"Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened,
and I will give you rest."
He doesn't phone or email us! He invites to come and rest in his love.

His very words suggest an image of outstretched arms,
offering an embrace big enough and deep enough
to engulf the burdens of us all
and -perhaps more significantly-
an embrace to enfold the burdens of each of us individually.

Although these words are some 2,000 years old,
They echo personally in the burdened hearts of everyone in this church today.

"Come to me," says Jesus...

Come to me, all you who are burdened with loneliness and fear..
Come to me, all you whose hearts ache with worry for those you love..
Come to me, all you who are burdened by the war...
Come to me, all you who live with sickness and pain...
Come to me, all you who are weary of unemployment,
or tired from working too hard...
Come to me, all you whose poverty shackles your human dignity...
Come to me, all you who are haunted by painful memories...
Come to me, all you whose relationships are broken and failing...
Come to me, all you whose labor goes unnoticed, without appreciation...
Come to me, all you who suffer prejudice
for who you are and whom you love...
Come to me, all you who grieve the loss of a loved one,
who grieve the loss of a parish,
Come to me, all you who have been misunderstood and judged by others...
Come to me, all you suffer injustice and whose cries go unheard...
Come to me, all you who have been forgotten or ignored by others...
And come to me, all you who fear that *I* have forgotten you,
Come to me, all you whose burdens lead you to wonder
if God has abandoned you to your pain...

Come to me, all you who fear you have lost me
and know that you are *already* in my arms,
and in my arms you will find rest, for my yoke is easy, its burden light...

Jesus offers us rest, comfort, and the easing of our pain...
He promises no easy way out.
He offers no instant cure or solution of our problems.

But like a mother with her child,
he offers a lap to sit on, arms to rest in,
and a gentle, soothing voice that promises, even in the hard times,
“All shall be well... all shall be well... all shall be well...”

Often the gospel message calls us to task or challenges us to action.
Today the gospel invites us simply to rest in the arms of Jesus...

So come, come to him -
all you who labor and find life burdensome -
come to the table he prepares for you,
where he welcomes and feeds you,
where he comforts and holds and heals you...
Come share in his body and blood
in the bread and cup of the eucharist.
Come, and take on the yoke of his love for you,
for his yoke is easy, and its burden light,
and all shall be well... and all shall be well...

- *Rev. Austin Fleming*