

Fourteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time - A -2020  
Zech.9.9-10///Romans 8.9,11-13///Matthew 11.25-30

→in the popular children's book...*Through the Looking Glass*...the sequel, to Alice's Adventures in Wonderland...the author, Lewis Carrol writes:

→Alice never could quite make out **how it** was that they began...all she remembers is, that they were running hand in hand, and the Queen went so fast **that it** was all she could do to keep up with her...and still the Queen kept crying...*faster...faster*...but Alice felt she could not go any faster

→the most curious part of all this was that the trees and other things around them never seemed to change their place...however fast they went...they never seemed to pass anything...

→and just as Alice was getting quite exhausted, finding herself sitting on the ground...breathless....she says... "*why do I believe I've been under this tree the whole time.*"

→to which the Queen replies... "*here you see, it takes all the running you can do to keep in the same place...if you want to get somewhere else...you have to run at least twice as fast....*"

PAUSE

→one summer, when she was just the right age for adventure...**she** discovered the stories of this girl named Alice...

→she read that lucky Alice, tumbled down a rabbit hole and walked through a looking glass into a strange and wonderful world....a place far removed from **her** own very ordinary, boring, suburban life.

→the adventures of Alice....became her favorite book, worn and grubby as she kept one eye on every page and the other eye on her neighbor's cat as he napped in the sun.

→she hoped that he would be like the cat in the story....a cat who could appear and disappear at will, leaving nothing behind but a smile.

→however after a careful observation and a bribery attempt involving tuna...she was forced to admit that he was just a plain ordinary cat...just like her.

→that summer she was almost always late for supper...she could be found talking to caterpillars...just to see if they would talk back....

→or studying the mirror in her mother's bedroom to see if it led to somewhere else...or poking a stick down a promising hole in the backyard.

→Alice's adventures made **her own life** seem rather **tame and mundane**...

→after all...how could a patch of crabgrass, a sleepy cat, a house full of commonplace mirrors compare to playing croquet with a Queen and having tea with a Mad Hatter...

→[as a result] she couldn't wait to grow up...determined to make her life anything but **ordinary**...

→she would own beautiful things, meet exotic people, go on exciting adventures and if she tumbled down the occasional rabbit hole...so much the better!

→however like so many of us...she discovered rather quickly that reality is very different than the **dream**.

→years later when her childhood was boxed up and put away on a shelf...she realized one day that, just like Alice...she had been running faster and faster, trying to keep up but never seeming to pass anything...

→she always believed that if she ran fast for a long time...she would get somewhere nice...

→ yet no matter how much money she earned, no matter how many toys she bought, no matter how many hours she worked [or how well she played the game]...she found herself one day, looking around in surprise...breathless and exhausted.

→from deep within her memories came the Queen's voice saying... *"it takes all the running you can do, just to keep in the same place...if you want to go somewhere else, you must run at least twice as fast..."*

→running twice as fast...////...she was already running as fast as her legs would go

...trying to get ahead...striving to be the best

→she had mastered the art of multi-tasking years ago...

→her schedule posted on the refrigerator looked like plans to invade a small country....her freezer was filled with microwave meals...and most food was gulped in the car or eaten in front of the open refrigerator.

→the dining room table was buried under school projects, orphaned socks and a work portfolio that never seem lighter no matter how late she worked.

→despite her determination to make her life anything but common...she found that owning beautiful things didn't mean much if you never get to use them....and exotic people and places eventually become ordinary

→much to her dismay...even falling down the occasional rabbit hole wasn't all it was cracked up to be...

→despite her best efforts ....all she had to offer anyone was her exhaustion,...her overflowing in-box...and lately...her short temper...

→...even when she went to church she felt...

→uninspired...not healed...or reconciled...not prayerful...or fed...or even thankful...

→most Sunday's she just felt tired....

→Often in her despair she thought.... "**how much harder do I have to work...to make it all work?**"

---until one day... the reading at Mass...brought the phrase... "*come to me all you who labor and are heavy burdened and I will give you rest...take my yoke upon you and learn from me for I am meek and humble of heart...and you will find rest for yourselves...*"

→to her...those words felt like water on parched soil...

→she was so tired of being tired...and tired of trying to do it all...

→that approach hadn't worked out so well....and so maybe it was time to try another way...

→the yoke that Jesus was offering....

PAUSE

→in agriculture...a yoke is a wooden beam...caved and fitted between a pair of oxen or horses..

→it allows them to pull together on a plow or a heavy load

→it is designed to make a tough job easier...to forge the animals into a team...working toward a common goal and sharing common burden...

→a yoke can also be a mark of subservience or a token of defeat.

→it can be a metaphor for something oppressive or a symbol of evil that must be shaken off.

→Jesus often shamed the Pharisees for placing heavy burdens on the people and Peter accused them of putting an unbearable yoke upon the necks of the disciples...

→maybe like Alice...we have been running faster and faster to make it all work.

Maybe—we have come to believe that the burden is ours and ours alone...and so

**we run twice as fast to get half as far.**

→have we been working just too hard to get every thing done...

→are we burdened by pain, or bitterness or grief beyond this moment?

→are we living in darkness having given up on the light?

→are we enslaved to our fears, our worries and our uncertainties?

→no matter what our circumstances or stage in life may be...today Jesus invites is to  
three things...

---come to him....take his yoke upon us...and learn from him

→then and only then can we find true rest

---this invitation is always open...the yoke is always shared... and the lessons  
continue to set us free....

*Come to me all you who labor and are burdened and I will give you rest...take my yoke  
upon you and learn from me...for I am meek and humble of heart...and you will find rest for  
yourselves...for my yoke is easy and my burden light.*