

JULY 17 2025 FATHER HENK VAN MEIJEL

It's about the shortest Gospel reading you can get, but yet it goes right to the core of our faith.

"My yoke, take upon your yoke and learn from me. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

We would think — or human nature, of course, would say — God's burden is not light, it's very heavy. It's not easy to follow the Lord. But it comes down to remembering our covenant with God.

We each have a covenant with God. If you were baptized and you had confirmation, you have a covenant with God.

What is that covenant like? It is, of course, a relationship where we trust one another. I have to do my best, I have to trust God, and God will trust me that I will hold up my end of the deal, so to speak.

To embrace that takes a lot of time for us. It often will take a lifetime; it can even be on the death bed before we really embrace that covenant with God. We also have to trust that God works through history. We are — or I am — just a tiny part in salvation history, but there's a whole other storyline going on.

Of course, we, as little people, do not have the big picture. I only have this tiny little picture, but I'm asked to trust.

This is also like when we had the first reading of Exodus, and Moses is by the burning bush and Moses says, "Well, what am I going to call you?" and God says, "I am who I am."

With God, we can never fully understand — God is incomprehensible. In theology, we say God is outside of space and time. And if you

understand that, then I would say you're not here on Earth! God is outside of space and time, and yet God is imminent — God is right here. Right here where we are. Right where you are.

If you are looking at your computer or your TV screen, God is right with you. This is totally incomprehensible for us.

But can I give my life to God? Can I trust that God will bring good out of my life?

Of course, we live in a culture where it is promoted that I'm the little god, it's all about me, and I have to follow my own little ways — what I think is best, not what the teachings tell us is best, but what I think is best.

We end up with beginning-of-life and end-of-life issues. It is always about taking control of my life. There is something in each one of us — and I have the same battle, of course — we like to have control over all life. But in actual fact, we do not have control over life. We do not have control over our families, over our spouses. We have to trust.

We have to trust that God will bring good out of bad.

This was the same for Moses. When we start making choices about abortion and, of course, MAiD (medical assistance in dying), then we want to have control of our life again, without really giving our life to God, to say, "God, I don't understand. I accept my suffering," and to let God use our suffering for the good of others, and not to make an end to it.

I was shocked a little while ago. A person I worked with for many years has cancer, and he said, "As soon as I have a chance, I will have MAiD. We're going to make an end to it. I don't believe in God, I don't care. I don't want to have anything to do with it."

As he talked on, it's kind of interesting — he said to me, "If I had the courage, I would commit suicide, but I don't have that courage, so someone else will have to do it for me."

That is trying to take control and trying to get the easy way out, while suffering, especially in the last days of life, can be a real blessing. Especially when we can embrace our suffering and be that sign of God for others, and let God use our suffering for the good of others.

We have to internalize that. Our suffering can also become a prayer. A prayer for others. A prayer for our family. A prayer for our children, our grandchildren who might be suffering. A prayer for peace in the world.

We let God use our life as God desires.

This is, of course, very difficult for each one of us. As Jesuits, we have St. Ignatius of Loyola. As he was thinking of the meaning of life himself, there is a whole story there about how he had to give up control of his own life. He came up with the first principle and foundation.

It sounds very abstract, but he says, and I quote:

"Thus far as we are concerned, we should not want health more than illness, wealth more than poverty, fame more than disgrace, a long life more than a short one, and similarly for all the rest, but we should desire and choose only what helps us towards the end for which we were created. And we are created to serve God."

A long life or short life, it doesn't matter. Sickness or health, it doesn't matter. It is about giving our life to God. Fame or "disfame," we just accept what comes.

Actually, I'll just say for my own life, some days I'm the worst guy on the planet, and a few months later, I'm the best guy who existed. People say all kinds of things, and we should not listen to people, but we should keep the road and trust that God will bring good out of our lives.

Just like Moses at the burning bush — he did not understand, but he had to accept. Accept that God works through salvation history. We just have that little part, but God has the big picture.

Am I going to come along for the ride, or am I going to come along kicking and screaming? We each have that choice.

Amen.