

**Homily for the 14<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time and  
the Admission of Grant Wilson and Chris Trummer  
to Candidacy for Holy Orders**

**Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception  
Springfield, Illinois**

**† Most Reverend Thomas John Paprocki  
Bishop of Springfield in Illinois**

Reverend Fathers, Deacon(s), Seminarians, my beloved brothers and sisters in Christ, it is good that we are here, for today we celebrate not only the 14<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time, we also celebrate the admission of our Springfield seminarians Grant Wilson and Christopher Trummer to Candidacy for Holy Orders as they prepare to leave later this month for Rome, where they will begin their theological studies at the Pontifical North American College.

How often in our lives have we heard or perhaps even thought, that “there must be more to life?” I would venture to guess that it isn’t as uncommon as one might think. For we as humans are designed to follow a higher purpose, and it is when we seek follow the will of our Lord for our lives that we feel most fulfilled. During this year of our Fourth Diocesan Synod, we, the people of the Diocese of Springfield in Illinois, are called in

a special way to reflect on this idea and to identify how we might follow the will of our Lord more closely as His disciples.

Could it be that these questions about there being more to life arise more often when we are focused on ourselves and making ourselves “happy” rather than focusing on how we are called to follow the will of God for our lives? Our second reading today might shed some light on this topic, for we hear Saint Paul tell the Romans that “if you live according to the flesh, you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.”<sup>1</sup> These words can certainly be applied to our understanding of discipleship and our desire for there to be something more to life. For if we live according to the flesh and seek things that bring fleeting happiness in this world, we will not only be left feeling empty in this life, but ultimately, we will be unworthy of eternal life. If, however, we seek to follow the direction of the Spirit in our lives and to live as disciples of our Lord, then not only will we be more fulfilled in this life, but we will be worthy of the rest that our Lord promises to those who have labored to build up the kingdom of God.

I know that you may be thinking that following the will of our Lord and living as true disciples of Christ seems to be easier said than done in

the midst of a world that places greater emphasis on personal happiness than on the good of others and building up treasure on earth rather than treasure in heaven, but our Lord is with us each step of the way to guide us and give us His grace to make this task manageable. In our Gospel today we hear Jesus tell those who had gathered to hear Him preach:

“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.”<sup>2</sup>

In the day and age in which Jesus was preaching, this message would have made much more sense to his audience than it might immediately make to us today. If however, we take a moment to consider what a yoke is and what our Lord was saying to His listeners, it certainly makes sense in our striving to live as His disciples today as well.

Our Lord offers us a yoke that is easy and a burden that is light, but what exactly does this mean? On a technical level, a yoke is a device that was used by farmers to harness two animals together so that they might work in unison rather than independently when ploughing the fields. On a more metaphorical level, the rabbis often referred to the interpretation of the Torah as a “yoke” which was neither easy nor light. What our Lord was

saying is that when compared to the message taught by other rabbis, His was easy, and if we connect ourselves to Him under His yoke, then He is there to lighten the burden of living as His disciples.

My dear brothers and sisters, I know that following the will of our Lord doesn't always feel like it is yoke that is easy or a burden that is light. At times, it may even feel like following the ways of the world would be easier than living for Christ and seeking to follow His will in our lives. But I can assure you that our Lord is there to help lighten the burden. You see, the thing that is easy for us forget is that a yoke takes two to maneuver it. We are never left on our own to shoulder the burden of cultivating a life of Christian discipleship -- our Lord is always connected to us if we take these burdens to Him in prayer.

It is part of our human instinct to try to fix something that is bothering or burdening us rather than ask for help. Perhaps we don't want to burden someone else with our struggles or our problems, but I can assure you that our Lord wants us to bring these to Him so that He might give us the grace that we need to overcome them. So, as we strive to live as Christ's disciples in the midst of the world today, may we always remember that uniting ourselves to Jesus under His yoke of discipleship

and our striving to follow our Lord's will for our lives, while not always easy in the moment, will ultimately lead to greater fulfillment in this life and our being worthy of the rest that our Lord promises in the next.

To you my beloved sons in the seminary, as you journey toward the day where you will share in the ministerial Priesthood of Christ you must daily bind yourselves ever more closely to him under the yoke of discipleship so that you may someday be worthy to help to lighten the burden of those who will be entrusted to your spiritual care. Please know that you don't undertake this next period of your formation alone; we, the people of this Church are here to support and assist you with our love and prayers, entrusting you daily to our Lord, so that you might learn from Him how to call all mankind to live as Christ's disciples.

May God give us this grace. Amen.

---

<sup>1</sup> Romans 8:13

<sup>2</sup> Matthew 11: 28-30