

One truth seminary training doesn't teach you is this:
church properties are always in need of repair!
We've recently made some significant improvements
to the physical plant of our parish:
- the parish center in West Concord has been painted
and a large conference room has been divided by a new wall
into an office and a copy center;
- the work on the front steps of the church
and in the chapel lobby downstairs has been completed;
- the church has been painted and has a new roof.

That's not even all that needs to be done –
but it's a great start!

But there's one repair I know we'll never need to make
and we can, literally, thank God for that.

What might that be?

Well, when you consider the weight of failings, burdens and pain
that we all carry and bring in here with us every weekend,
you'd think that the floor beneath our feet would just cave in –
but it doesn't.

When you consider the heaviness of heart that so many bring here:
the weight of hurt, the excess baggage of worries;
the backpacks of guilt and anxiety;
the suit cases of unsurety and confusion;
you'd think the floor would collapse beneath it all –
but it doesn't.

Jesus shores up the foundation
of the sanctuary of prayer our hearts comprise.

Jesus can promise what he does in the gospel today
(peaceful rest, an easy yoke, a light burden)
because he is always there to help us bear our wearied and burdened lives:
indeed, he has already carried our sins and our lives to the Cross.
The "floor" beneath our hearts' sanctuary does not collapse
because its burdens are carried by Christ.

In Jesus' words here,
there's no promise of a quick-fix to our problems,
no instant solution for our difficulties.
We will find solace in Jesus' comforting words
when we have found the truth of his Father's gracious will
as it is revealed in Christ who chooses to reveal the same to us.

Sometimes we might wonder why Jesus hasn't fixed all our problems
after we've prayed long and hard for an answer to them.
But look at the One to whom we pray:
the Crucified, the rejected and abandoned One.
If we ask Jesus to help us, we should not be surprised
if leaning on his shoulder finds us on the way of the Cross,
even as we hope and long for the healing and the peace
we know is his to give.

We don't all, always come to Mass preoccupied with our problems,
but it's not unusual that simply being here puts us in touch
with our secret burdens and concerns.
If that happens for you, as it does for me,
know that you are not alone.

If you will, then, close your eyes for just a moment,
and consider all the burdened hearts gathered here for prayer this today...

Let's pray for each other...

Let's remember that behind a smiling face
may be a heart bathed in tears...
that a light step might disguise a limping spirit...

Let's be mindful of the invisible but weighty baggage each of us carries...

Let's wonder about ways we might help others
carry their burdens
and ways we might let others help us carry ours...

Let's imagine all of us gathered at the foot of the Cross,
laying down, for an hour or so, the burdens we bear...

Let's look up at the Cross and remember that Jesus knows, so well,
how heavy the load can be,
how alone any one of us might find ourselves...

Let's ask Jesus to reveal to us
the truth of his Father's gracious will
and help us find in our own lives
the peace of Jesus' promise...

At this table, the Lord gathers us to be nourished
with the gift born of his bearing our sins:
the sacrament of his Body and Blood in the eucharist;
the sacrifice he offers that we might find
peaceful rest,
a yoke that is easy,
and a burden that is light.