

Rev. Paul A. Hottinger

**Yoked with God**    Second Week of Advent    Wednesday, December 7, 2016    8:15 AM  
**Is 40:25-31;    Mt 11:28-30**    St. Ambrose, bishop and Doctor of the Church    (We are in fact put on earth to cooperate with God and to work.)

Today's gospel parallels exactly the reading from Isaiah you just heard. **“Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, and you will find rest for yourselves. For my yoke is easy, and my burden light.”**

What Isaiah was talking about was the fact that **people are often discouraged**. They are lonely and they feel isolated, but this is because **they do not experience the proximity of God in the lives**. That's what Isaiah is saying and it's what Jesus is saying. “Come to me.” We are not put on earth to be alone. We are not put on earth to be individuals, although that's the hallmark of our society, how we even admire great individuals, powerful figures. But we are not created for that. **We are created for community and for relationship.**

And when we come to Christ, when we come to God, we find rest, not because there is freedom from labor, not at all. **We are, in fact, put on earth to cooperate with God and to work**. But the work we do with God, that's the yoke. There are two yoked into the plow, so to speak. In the ancient world it was very often an ox and a farmer pulled the plow together. Here **Jesus says, “I will pull the plow with you.”** So it's not that we are resting in the sense of inactive, but we are resting in the sense that our work is being done with God and therefore there is something at work that actually gives refreshment, because **to accomplish something with God is very refreshing**. It's enlivening. It gives purpose. And that is exactly what Jesus is offering. So he says, “My yoke is easy, my burden light.” It's a yoke; there is a yoke there, and there is a burden. Work must be done. There is purpose to everyone's life. We are not put here for leisure sake. But it's easy and it's light and it's life-giving and it's good. And so this is a problem that **each person has to learn for herself and himself: how to come to the Lord and join with him in the work of God.**