

Homily based on the readings from July 18, 2024 (Isaiah 26.7-9, 12, 16-19; Matthew 11.28-30)

Some of you may have heard me say this before, but Christ's statement in today's Gospel – *Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest* – has sometimes been referred to as the *comfortable words*. The idea, of course, is not that these words are soft and fuzzy, but that they actually bring us *comfort*.

Throughout the history of the Church, there have been *countless* individuals who have borne burdens that most of us could not even *imagine* taking on. There are people who accomplished amazing tasks – people like Mother Cabrini, Mother Teresa, and even Mother Angelica. There are people who demonstrated unbelievable courage in the face of persecution and torment – Saint Lawrence, Saint Thomas More, Saint Maximilian Kolbe. There are people who displayed an almost *superhuman* level of compassion for their brothers and sisters – Saint

Elizabeth of Hungary, Saint Martin de Porres, Saint John Marie Vianney.

I must confess that the saint we commemorate today, Saint Camillus de Lellis, is not an individual with whom I have a great deal of familiarity. Nevertheless, the burdens he bore were truly awe-inspiring. Throughout his life, he suffered from a severe wound to his leg that he received while serving in the army. Despite this fact – or perhaps because of it – he founded a religious order that is dedicated to caring for the sick and injured – particularly those wounded in battle. It is an interesting fact that this order, known as the *Camillians* or the *Ministers of the Sick*, adopted the symbol of a *red cross* nearly three hundred years before the humanitarian organization that is *known* by that name was founded. With regard to Saint Camillus himself, he would often *crawl* to attend to the invalids under his care when his own injury prevented him from walking.

The point, of course, is that neither Saint Camillus – nor any of the other saints to whom we look for inspiration – could have accomplished these incredible feats on their own. Every one of them, in their own particular way, entrusted their burdens to Christ. As Christians, it is our duty – it is our privilege – to do the same. Each of us carries a unique burden – the nature of which may not, even yet, be fully apparent – but all of us are in the same basic situation. The only way to bear our burdens – the only way to find rest – is to entrust ourselves fully and completely to the love and mercy of Jesus Christ. That is the greatest comfort anyone could possibly imagine.