This week I completed a week in my hometown:
Omaha...a round of visits with old time friends....lovely and enriching.
In this week's Gospel, Jesus says, "Come to me all you who labor and are burdened....."
I visited two friends burdened with the weight of cancer....a very heavy burden.
And yet, their spirits were so light and buoyant!

Lori, a young, vibrant woman whom I have known since her birth,
ran miles every day, until suddenly an earlier cancer rebounded.
Some years ago her parents brought me a beautiful Marian stole from Lourdes
with an image of Our Lady of Lourdes embroidered on it.
After anointing her, I wrapped the Lourdes stole over her shoulders
and prayed that Our Lady of Lourdes and Perpetual Help
would take her into her care.

The other person I anointed was Sherry who is hanging in there
with pancreatic cancer going into her 5th year.
And recently the cancer has taken a bad turn.
I have known her since 1960.
She was a teenager at South High school
when she took convert instructions from me
and entered into the Catholic Faith Community.

Later I witnessed her marriage to Don and this September will mark their 50th anniversary.
Instead of bemoaning her health condition,
Sherry was laughing and telling me what a great joy she was experiencing
because she has lived long enough to witness
the birth of her first grand child two years ago.

Like Lori, she is a devout Catholic and her faith enlivens her path.

All of this was humbling to me.
For as I listened to Sherry and shared her vibrant faith-filled attitude,
I realized that what I was witnessing was the student
now surpassing the teacher who once led her into faith.

NOW she was leading me.

Breakfast Question: What is my burden?
Personal Reflection: What lightens my burden?