



16th Sunday of Ordinary Time - Mark 6: 30-34

The resting place

Jesus took off his sandals and holding them in his hand he waded into the water. The refreshing coolness soothed his tired feet.

The Sea of Galilee stretched before him, a band of blue beneath the sweltering hills on the other side. To the north the shoreline curved away toward green clumps of trees on a distant headland. A breeze ruffled the water and flowed across Jesus' hot face. The cool air was like the Father's caress, affirming him and all that he had accomplished in the past hectic weeks.

The Disciples were now returned from their first two-by-two journeys into neighboring towns and villages. They all had miraculous stories to tell to Jesus. Even now Peter was rambling on about his preaching, anointing and healing experiences. Jesus felt proud of his brave disciples. They had been so full of faith as they went without him into the harsh world.

Suddenly a sad awareness surged through Jesus. It came like a dark shadow passing overhead. He realized that his disciples' first practice mission was a real preparation for what they must soon do without him. It was all happening so fast. If only time could stand still...if only...

The noise of the approaching crowd stirred Jesus from these thoughts and he turned from the tranquil solitude of the lake to face them. Like a thick syrup, the crowd flowed down the hillsides to the water's edge. There were thousands of them. Like a great flock of sheep they patiently waited with their shepherd. Jesus' only escape was by boat, out onto the water. John and the other Disciples had been sent to get a boat. They were now sculling a beamy fishboat along the shoreline. When they reached Jesus Andrew tossed a line to Peter who hauled the stern into shallow water. Jesus and Peter climbed into the boat and the others began to row out against the breeze.

They followed the coastline, hoping to find a deserted place where they could put ashore and rest a little. The afternoon breeze shifted south, so they raised a sail and began to glide silently toward the north shore. The sun rolled westward over the Galilean Hills and began to fall toward the horizon and behind the cities of Merom and Hazor which lay beyond it.

They lowered their sail as the boat rounded a tree-covered headland and they rowed into the sheltered bay hidden behind it. It wasn't deserted. People were already there, waiting. They had followed on foot.

Jesus sighed. There would be no rest. These were his people, his followers, his flock. He would give them everything. Now it was only his energy. Later it would be his life.

Jesus waded ashore, shedding his exhaustion like water. He began to preach.



All of us have experienced complete exhaustion. We have reached the end of our road; we're at the limits of our ability to cope. It seems impossible to go on. Yet, we must go on, and we do, in the face of everything we somehow survive. In moments like these we live our finest hour. We triumph.

If we can hold firm to the deep-rooted tree of our faith, when we one day encounter mighty storms from the gates of hell, these torrents and winds shall not prevail against us. Holding on, no matter what, we shall triumph.

ST. MARY MAGADALENE

July 22nd



On July 22, the Church celebrates the Feast of St. Mary Magdala, apostle to the apostles. She is one of the most prominent women mentioned in the New Testament.

Her name comes from the town of Magdala in Galilee, where she originated. Scripture introduces her as a woman “who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities. Mary, called Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out.” (Luke 8:21).

Scholars identify Mary Magdalene with the sinful woman who anointed the feet of Christ with oil in the house of Simon the Pharisee (Lk. 7:36-50). Others associate her with Mary, sister of Martha and Lazarus (Lk. 10:38-42; Jn. 11). Some believe the three figures to be one person, while others believe them to be three distinct individuals.

What the Scriptures make certain about Mary Magdala is that she was a follower of Christ who accompanied and ministered to him (Lk. 8:2-3). The Gospels record her as being one of the women present at Christ’s crucifixion.

“The story of Mary of Magdala reminds us all of a fundamental truth; the disciple of Christ is one who, in the experience of human weakness, has had the humility to ask for his help, has been healed by him and has set out following closely after him, becoming a witness of the power of his merciful love that is stronger than sin and death.”

- Pope Benedict XVI July 23, 2006.

