

16B SML 2021
MK 6:30-34

Never before have men possessed so much to save time. The other day Father Roy and I were in the kitchen as I was waiting for something to heat up in the microwave. I relayed how long it took to heat a platter with a pot of boiling water before microwaves. It took forever. In a recent meeting with a couple to be married, they commented that I had a typewriter. I don't know that they ever saw a typewriter. I bragged how efficient I was to be able to type a term paper in college and seminary, eight minutes a page, which was fast using a typewriter, but slow today using a PC.

This is an age old problem. I've recently been tuning in to "The Chosen." "The Chosen" is a television drama based on the life of Jesus Christ and it is phenomenal. I highly recommend it! We will be watching "The Chosen" as a parish for six weeks starting mid-October. Anyway, in one episode, "The Chosen" portrays the call of Peter on the Sea of Galilee. He had been working on the Sabbath, which is forbidden, because he was so far behind paying his taxes. He was going to be arrested in the morning so time was of the essence, the pressure was unbearable.

- ✓ Not enough time.
- ✓ No fish.
- ✓ No peace of mind.
- ✓ No nothing.

Our Lord is on the shore, tells Peter to cast the net on the other side and makes a sizable catch, enough to pay off his debt, and then says to Peter, “Come, follow Me.”

The call to Matthew:

- ✓ “nervous twitch” Matthew,
- ✓ so hated by his Jewish brethren that Matthew eats his Sabbath meal with no one but his dog,

was just as dramatic. Matthew was working for Rome 24/7 before his call to “Come, follow me.”

Yet this division of time between working and not-working is too simple. It’s not uncommon for someone to confess

- ✓ the amount of time they waste,
- ✓ on and off the clock
- ✓ on their computer,
- ✓ or their phone,
- ✓ looking at stuff they shouldn’t be,
- ✓ aimless loafing, waiting-around for something interesting to come along.

For many, it is:

- ✓ the flight from consciousness,
- ✓ the flight from decision making,
- ✓ the flight from responsibility.

For those who are caught up in:

- ✓ the dark days of the daily grind like Peter and Matthew,
- ✓ or the grey days of wasting time,
- ✓ or the beige days of boredom,

the problem is not to diagnose the malady, but to heal it.

So where do we go on the dark, grey or beige days? For the answer, go back to that dark day for unbelievers and that grey and beige day for unbelievers, when darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon, as if ashamed to shed its light on the crime committed at Calvary. From this dismal crime scene went up the cry, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken me?"

These words were the first words of prophetic Psalm 21, written about a thousand years before this incredibly dark day. Though the Psalm begins with this cry of sadness, if Our Lord had finished reciting it, He would have ended with words of:

- ✓ joy,
- ✓ victory,

- ✓ the promise to feed the hungry
- ✓ and to establish spiritual authority over the earth.

Anyone walking the dark, grey or beige valleys can learn that the Gospel of Christ can be heard as Good News even by those whose life is shattered by bad news, because only those who walk in darkness ever see the stars. The reason why some souls emerge purified from walking the dark valley, while other souls come out worse, is because the first had One in whom they could trust and the second had none but themselves. The atheist, therefore is properly defined as the person who has no invisible means of support.

That is the difference between those who have faith in God and His purposes, and those who have not. Over the past century, the man without faith was generally greatly surprised at the dark turn of events with two world wars in 21 years, and in recent times, the resurgence of anarchy and the abandonment of moral principles. But the man with faith in God was not so surprised. The sum came out just as he had expected; chaos was in the cards, even though they had not yet been dealt, for he knew that “Unless the Lord build the house, they labor in vain who build it.” (PS 126:1)

H.G. Wells was an English writer during the period of the world wars. An optimist who became a pessimist as the darkness of WWII covered the earth, he wrote something dark, grey and beige:

The universe is bored with man, is turning a hard face to him; and I see him being carried more and more rapidly . . . along the stream of fate to degradation, suffering and death.

Now read St. Paul, a man of faith who lived in dark days too. He had been persecuted and he knew that the tyrant who held the sword would one day draw it across his neck, yet in full trust he says:

What will separate us from the love of Christ? Will anguish, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril or the sword? No, in all these things we conquer overwhelmingly through Him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things to come, nor might, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature will be able to separate us from the love of God, through Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:35-39)

You see the difference. A man with no faith vs a man with faith. The man of faith stuck in the dark, grey or beige has recourse and that recourse was offered to Peter, Matthew, Paul and every other disciple from their day to ours, in Jesus' command to "Come, follow Me."

That recourse was offered over and again during the years of Jesus' preaching: "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy burdened, and I will give you rest." (MT 11:29)

That recourse is offered to us again this evening/morning in the words that Jesus spoke after the Apostles' return. "Come away by yourselves and rest awhile."

In a previous homily, I have cited messages received by an unnamed monk from 2007 – 2016, messages from Our Lord and Our Lady in the silence of Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. These messages were written down in his book entitled *In Sinu Jesu*, or in English, "On the Chest of Jesus." Here is part of one of the messages where Our Lord asked the author to "Come to Me." It was received on the First Sunday of Advent:

Begin this Advent season full of confidence and hope in My unfailing mercy. Although I am coming, and coming soon, I am already present. Look at My Eucharistic

Face: know that I am here for you in this the Sacrament of My love. I am here to console you, to comfort and instruct you, to give you an experience of My divine friendship already here in this life so as to prepare you for the glories of friendship in the next. In this Sacrament I wait for you. So many emphasize that they must wait for Me, and yet I am already present, close to them, and disposed to reveal to them the secrets of My Heart. They forget that it is I who wait for them to come to Me. How often did I say to My disciples, "Come to Me." They understood, at least most of them did, the intensity of My longing for the company of souls. I would have all souls come to Me and remain with Me.

With whom do you want to keep company?

- ✓ the dark, grey and beige?
- ✓ the likes of atheists?
- ✓ Pessimists?
- ✓ H.G. Wells?

or:

- ✓ Peter,
- ✓ Matthew,

- ✓ Paul, and
- ✓ an unnamed monk?

The choice is ours and the choice is obvious.