

## We Need Rest

16th Sunday in Ordinary Time (Year B)

July 22, 2018

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I think most of us can relate to the feeling of being drained. If we aren't currently feeling this way (although many in this church today are), we at least went through it before. It is the feeling of being overwhelmed and life just being too much to take in. We're tired, irritable, and just want to sleep for a couple months to get away from it all. Perhaps we've reached the point where even the things we once enjoyed are no longer fun. This human experience of being drained is what Jesus and the disciples were feeling in today's Gospel.

In the Gospel story from *Mark*, Jesus and the disciples were so busy doing ministry that they didn't even have time to eat! They didn't have any time to take care of themselves. Recognizing this, Jesus says to them, "come away by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while." This is an acknowledgement that all humans, including Jesus himself, need rest. While that rest is short lived in today's story as the crowds followed them and Jesus again started ministering to them, the recognition for rest is at least there.

In the words of the First Reading from *Jeremiah*, God wants to bring all of us back to that meadow, that place of security. God wants to be like the shepherd in our *Psalms* today, so that we can say, "in verdant pastures he gives me repose; beside restful waters he leads me; he refreshes my soul."

Each of us needs our places of rest, security, and repose. To keep going and going and going is impossible. It is unhealthy and a denial of our humanity, a humanity consecrated by Jesus himself. God uses our places of rest as an opportunity to give us new energy. As long as we strive to carve out these moments, are faithful to them, and can deal with being alone, we will be renewed by God during our moments of rest.

Mother Teresa, who founded one of the most active, demanding, and busy groups of religious sisters, the Missionaries of Charity, knew that the sisters needed time for rest if they were to be able to minister so directly to the poor. In her rule of life, she mandated that "the sisters shall spend one day in every week, one week in every

month, one month in every year, and one year in every six years in the motherhouse” to rest and find spiritual strength. Even Mother Teresa recognized the need for rest. Whether she followed her own advice is another story!

*God wants us to admit to ourselves that we need places of rest, even when its a struggle to find them.*

Where are our places of rest? I hope Church is one of them. But there can and should be other places. And those places can change over time based on ones current life situation. But we have to seek them out. Otherwise, they will never happen. Life will get in the way. Let us pray that this Eucharist may be one of those places, for Jesus now calls us off by ourselves to rest awhile.