

Are We There Yet? WEEK THREE July 18, 2021

Next weekend we will have a visiting priest here at St. Pius -

Fr. Chris from Cross Catholic International.

His visit will allow me to be away for a weekend for the first time in six months.

So please welcome and thank Fr. Chris for me!

I'm looking forward to my time away.

Though I have to admit, I sometimes struggle to leave all the worries of my work at the parish behind.

I don't think I'm alone in this.

Taking a vacation and 'disconnecting' from work is hard for most people.

One reason for that is technology.

With the internet and all our devices, work is just one click away.

It can be so tempting to take calls or check work emails on vacation.

It requires real discipline to take a break.

But it's the only way to ensure that your time away is truly relaxing and refreshing.

SCREEN: Are We There Yet? main screen

Today is the final week of our message series titled, *Are We There Yet?*

In the gospel readings of this series,

Jesus has been inviting us to take a trip with him - the journey of discipleship.

Last week we heard that he sent out his Apostles to preach and heal.

Today we heard what happened when they returned.

Now, if you're someone who struggles to disconnect from work while on vacation, you can take some comfort in knowing that Jesus and his Apostles struggled too.

When they returned from their first mission, Jesus had a great vacation planned for them.

He said to them:

SCREEN: Come away by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while.

I can imagine them thinking, *“Yes! Finally, a break!”*

But sadly, it was not to be.

And that’s because people were coming and going in such great numbers, that Jesus and the Apostles had no opportunity even to eat.

Thankfully, there was a back up plan.

Jesus and his Apostles went off in the boat by themselves to a deserted place.

Only that plan also got derailed.

We heard that

‘people saw them leaving and many came to know about it.

When Jesus disembarked and saw the vast crowd,

his heart was moved with pity for them,

and he began to teach them many things.

So much for the vacation plans!

Now, clearly there were some options.

Jesus and the Apostles could have seen the crowd, gotten back in the boat and sailed for another port.

But that would have meant ignoring or angering the people who traveled there to be with them.

So, Jesus and the Apostles put their own plans on hold...for the time being.

And I say, ‘for the time being’ because

Jesus was not a workaholic.

He did not minister to people 24/7.

The Gospels record many times when Jesus got up early to go off and pray.

He would sneak off to be alone and reflect.

Jesus knew that if he was going to remain focused on his mission, he had to maintain a balance between work, rest, and prayer.

By doing this, Jesus was teaching his Apostles the importance of maintaining a balance in their lives.

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And the same is true for any who would follow him -

it's true for me and for you.

Like me, I'm guessing you might know someone you could consider a workaholic.

Someone who seems incapable of disconnecting from work or taking time off.

I remember taking a vacation with one priest who

felt the need to check in with his parish staff all day long.

He never relaxed, never disconnected and

ended the trip as stressed as he began.

That's a classic workaholic.

And the negative effects of that behavior can be serious and

sometimes deadly.

When someone doesn't take time to rest or recharge they can easily burn out.

As one pastor told me,

'When you don't take a break, you end up breaking.'

And a disciple who never takes time to spiritually recharge

by praying or reflecting will end up being good for nobody.

In church circles there is a myth that a person's work can be their prayer.

When someone says that it's usually an excuse for not slowing down

and taking time to pray.

As followers of Jesus we need to hear the message in

this Gospel reading and commit to regular time for prayer and rest.

So if you are someone who struggles to do what Jesus did,

ask yourself this question:

SCREEN: What in my daily life keeps me from spending time in prayer?

What in my daily life keeps me from spending time in prayer?

Be honest in answering this question.

Is it work?

Is it your schedule that gets in the way?

Is it being overcommitted?

Maybe it's spending time on the wrong things.

I know people who spend hours every day online or watching TV then say, “*I’m too busy to pray!*”

What is it for you?

What in your daily life keeps you from spending time in prayer?

Once you take a honest look at your daily routine it becomes possible to make some changes.

And I’d like to offer a few ways for you to consider.

Obviously it’s great if you are able to get away but if not, maybe you can create a mini staycation.

Carve out some quiet time by unplugging from all your devices.

Take one day or part of a day and turn everything off.

Don’t worry, the calls and texts and posts will all be waiting for you when you reconnect.

But give yourself the time to do as Jesus suggested, to go away and rest awhile.

Allow your mind, your heart to slow down and refresh.

Another practical step is to be very intentional about your sleep.

Give your body time to recover from the day with a full night’s sleep.

And be disciplined about your bedtime.

To help you fall asleep, experts recommend getting off of all your screens in the last hour before you go to bed.

Summer can be the perfect time to evaluate your life and routines.

So to get you started, I am going to end this message giving you a few moments of quiet to reflect on this question.

Ask God to speak to your heart and be willing to hear his answer.

We will take a few minutes now. *(3 minutes of silence)*.

Now let’s profess our faith.

Going deeper:

If you want to explore this topic a little further, here is a great article I recommend:

<https://careynieuwhof.com/productivity-shame-4-other-things-youll-experience-if-you-decide-to-be-totally-off-on-your-vacation/>