

GIFT of Sleep



Sunday Reflection With Fr. Rafal

Dear St. Joseph Parishioners and Visitors,

We saw in the Gospel of Mark last Sunday how Jesus sent the Twelve Apostles with a message of repentance. For those who accepted the message and began to pray, it opened the floodgates of God's grace. The hearers received two great blessings: physical healing (by anointing with oil) and liberation from demons.

Today, on the **16th Sunday in Ordinary Time**, we see the Apostles returning to Jesus with reports about what happened. After listening to them, Jesus does something beautiful. He takes them apart to "rest a while."

When Jesus speaks about resting a while, he doesn't mean, turn into a couch potato. To rest with Jesus is dynamic. It can of course include some sleep. Sleep is God's gift to restore our minds, our bodies and our emotions. Shakespeare puts it this way:

*"...innocent sleep,
Sleep that knits up the raveled sleeve of care,
The death of each day's life, sore labor's bath,
Balm of hurt minds, great nature's second course,
Chief nourisher in life's feast."*

Sleep, rest, is a marvelous, mysterious gift from God. But, after resting, a follower of Jesus does not go looking for distractions. Rather we return to Jesus, to reflect on what happened and to ask, What next?

The answer comes quickly. If you do the job well, you will be rewarded with more work! What we see today is a vast crowd coming to Jesus. You can imagine how the Apostles felt: At first the sight thrilled them, but very quickly they got scared - What are we going to do with all these people?

Well, we will find out next Sunday. Today's Gospel sets the stage for Jesus' greatest revelation. It will be a great revelation of multiplying bread and fish. My Brothers and Sisters, today he is with us at every Eucharist at the breaking of the bread, this special and unique moment when the disciples recognized him as the Savior of the world.

Have a Blessed Week!

Rev. Rafal Ligenza

Pastor — St. Joseph Parish