

Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time
July 22, 2018

Leader: A Reading from the Holy Gospel According to Mark

(Mk 6: 30 - 34)

ALL: Glory to You, O Lord.

The apostles gathered together with Jesus and reported all they had done and taught. He said to them, "Come away by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while." People were coming and going in great numbers, and they had no opportunity even to eat. So they went off in the boat by themselves to a deserted place. People saw them leaving and many came to know about it. They hastened there on foot from all the towns and arrived at the place before them.

When he disembarked and saw the vast crowd, his heart was moved with pity for them, for they were like sheep without a shepherd; and he began to teach them many things.

The Gospel of the Lord.

ALL: Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ.

Let us pray.

O Lord, You are my rock of refuge and my resting place.

Thank You for giving me a haven from the stress and troubles

that so frequently characterize my life in this hectic and demanding world.

I need to set aside time to sit in a quiet place and find rest in Your loving presence.

Thank You for inviting me to find rest in You.

Thank You for reminding me that I need to come away to a deserted place
and rest a while.

Teach me to find a better balance in my daily activities.

Shepherd Your wayward sheep into the fullness of life You alone can provide.

Jesus, I place my trust in You. Amen.

We Can Start in the Crowd, but with Jesus, We Can Move to the Boat... *

This short passage from Mark's Gospel completes the narrative of the Twelve being sent out by Jesus in pairs to preach repentance and minister to those in need of spiritual and physical healing. It also sets the stage for two episodes that manifest the power and compassion of the Lord, and are profoundly important in the unfolding revelation of His divine origin. This passage immediately precedes the multiplication of the loaves and the calming of the sea.

After teaching His disciples and instructing them privately, Jesus sent them out on their inaugural missionary journey. When they returned, Jesus prepared them for the next phase of their spiritual growth by inviting them to "Come away to a deserted place and rest a while." The apostles must have been a bit overwhelmed by the success of their

mission, and it was important that they remain rooted in the source of the power they were given. It was important for them to spend some quiet time with Jesus. In the Old Testament, the theme of rest is closely associated with the entry of the chosen people into the Promised Land following their forty years of wandering in the desert. It is also associated with the image of God as the shepherd Who gives pasture to His flock. These Old Testament images find fulfillment in Jesus. He is the long awaited Messiah and the fulfillment of God's promise that He Himself will shepherd His people. After learning from Jesus, and following His instructions in their missionary work, the Apostles are invited to find rest in the presence of the Lord. However, it appears that the only quiet time with Jesus they were actually afforded was the time they spent in the boat "by themselves" en route to the deserted place of refuge. The crowds anticipated their destination and "arrived at the place before them."

When Jesus saw the crowds, He could have instructed the disciples to get back in the boat and set out for another deserted place where they could rest and prepare for the upcoming events. He did not. Instead, when He disembarked and saw the crowd, "his heart was moved with pity for them, for they were like sheep without a shepherd, and he began to teach them many things." The apostles needed some quiet time with the Lord, and the time together in the boat must have seemed to be far too little, but Jesus recognized that the need of the crowd was even greater. The apostles were being drawn into closer and closer relationship with the Good Shepherd. By ministering to the crowds, first by instructing them, and then by feeding them miraculously, Jesus is demonstrating His great compassion. He is also showing His Apostles that the need for Jesus is universal. We need to hear His word and be fed in Eucharist. The Apostles were sent out to minister to the people, and when the crowds come to them, they are instructed to do the same.

* See The Collegeville Bible Commentary and The Jerome Biblical Commentary for additional discussion

Questions for a Quiet Moment:

Am I too busy to find rest in God's loving presence?

What is it I must do to set aside quiet time each day for prayer and reflection?

In the stillness, am I open to what Jesus wants to teach me?