

Resting in the Lord

Daily Gospel and Meditation / Liturgical Cycle A

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Mark 6:30-34

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.

Introductory Prayer: Lord, I believe that you are present here. You know me through and through, and despite my weaknesses, sins and imperfections you love me. Lord, thank you for your love. Today I give you my mind, my heart and my will. Mold me and use me as you wish.

Petition: Mary, obtain for me the grace to understand and live the Christian meaning of rest.

1. A Needed Rest: Jesus knows that his disciples need to rest after returning from a long stint of missionary work. There is a need to replenish energies — physical, mental and spiritual. It is within God's will to put moments of physical rest into our daily programs. Jesus tells the apostles to get away together, and with him. Physical rest, of course, is not laziness or dissipation. It is not a place to lose the spiritual tautness of our soul towards God and his things, or the readiness to do God's will at all times.

2. Thinking About Others: Jesus teaches us that being ready to do God's will in everything means also being always ready to serve others. How beautiful it is when families can relax together with each member not just selfishly thinking about myself, how much fun I can have, or making sure everyone obeys my whims! In a culture where "vacation" is synonymous with "loafing," Jesus reminds us that for a Christian, relaxing and having fun is are not incompatible with thinking about and serving others. Jesus' compassionate heart was always active, and even with rest on his mind, he was moved to give himself to the people who needed to hear the Word of God. Is my heart like Christ's? Am I aware of the physical and spiritual needs of my family and friends even on my "day off"?

3. Thinking About God: There is a deeper meaning to "rest": turning all our activity to glorify God and expressing our loving dependence on him. Commanded us to set apart one day of the week to "rest" in him, to direct our hearts and minds to him, to offer him the fruits of our week's work, and to receive his grace to begin another week. Sunday must be the highlight of a Christian's week, not just because he finds respite from his work, but because he offers all his work — and himself — to God the Father during the communal celebration of Mass, the heart of Sunday. This God-centered focus is extended throughout the whole Sunday rest, where "daily concerns and tasks can find their proper perspective: the material things about which we worry give way to spiritual values; in a moment of encounter and less pressured exchange, we see the true face of the people with whom we live. Even the beauties of nature — too often marred by the desire to exploit, which turns against man himself — can be rediscovered and enjoyed to the full" (John Paul II, Dies Domini, 67).

Conversation with Christ: Lord Jesus, help me to find my true rest in you. You are the source of all that is good. Help me to order all my work and material things towards spiritual values. Help me make Mass the heart of my Sunday. As well, help me use Sunday to see the true face of my

family, friends, colleagues and clients: they are souls which you call me to love, serve, and bring closer to you.

Resolution: I will find some concrete way to prepare myself and my family for the celebration of Sunday Mass: reflecting on the Mass readings, organizing ourselves to arrive early to visit Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, doing some service of charity like visiting the sick or elderly, etc.