

Commentary on the Gospel: True Rest is Born of Love

Gospel for the 16th Sunday in Ordinary Time (Year B), and commentary.

Gospel (*Mk 6:30-34*)

The apostles returned to Jesus, and told him all that they had done and taught. And he said to them, “Come away by yourselves to a lonely place, and rest a while.”

For many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat. And they went away in the boat to a lonely place by themselves. Now

many saw them going, and knew them, and they ran there on foot from all the towns, and got there ahead of them. As he landed he saw a great throng, and he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd; and he began to teach them many things.

Commentary

Jesus seeks a quiet place to rest with his apostles. So many people were coming to see him that they didn't have time even to eat.

Jesus spends his whole life loving. He works out of love and rests out of love. Jesus rests while looking on the multitude with love, with his heart moved for each and every one of them. Thus he teaches us that true rest is born of love—a rest that

renews us and enables us to look upon others with joy.

In contrast, when we look at ourselves, when we seek to rest by thinking only about ourselves, then no rest renews us or seems enough to us. At times we think we need to relax because we don't like our work and want to flee from it. And we seek diversions that help us escape from the realities of life and of other people. But in the end this rest leaves us dissatisfied.

Jesus goes off to rest, not to forget about the crowds but to give himself to them. Therefore he places himself at their service, since he knows that the only way to rest is to open oneself to others.

The same thing happens to us. How often after a day of tiring work, on arriving home we have forgotten about our tiredness because we

found something interesting and became absorbed in it.

What enables us to rest is not simply doing nothing, but discovering the love behind our life—God’s Love present throughout our day, and the love of those around us. In order to rest we need to slow down and let our heart be moved, looking on others with joy.

God has intended Sundays for our rest. He tells us: “stop, slow down a bit; think about who you are; don’t go through life so fast; if you go too fast, you will lose sight of the horizon.”

We need to slow down in order appreciate the world and enjoy it, to express our praise and gratitude, to look at our family, friends, work, and say “How beautiful life is!” And also in order to look inside our own heart, to consider whether during this week it has been filled with ashes or with the fire of love.

In the final analysis, we need to slow down in order to discover that we are children of God. As Saint Josemaria counsels us: “Rest in your divine filiation. God is a Father—your Father!—filled with tenderness, with infinite Love. Call him Father frequently and tell him, when you are alone, that you love him, that you love him very much! And that you feel proud and strong because you are his son” (*The Forge* 331).

Jesus is moved interiorly as he rests, and looks with joy upon all those men and women. We too will rest when we rediscover in Christ the meaning of our work and duties, when our heart is moved by our husband, our wife, our children, our brothers and sisters, our friends, and we look upon them with joy.

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