

Saturday 4th in Ordinary Time

Gospel text (Mk 6,30-34): The apostles returned and reported to Jesus all they had done and taught. Then he said to them, «Go off by yourselves to a remote place and have some rest». For there were so many people coming and going that the apostles had no time even to eat. And they went away in the boat to a secluded area by themselves. But people saw them leaving and many could guess where they were going. So, from all the towns they hurried there on foot, arriving ahead of them. As Jesus went ashore he saw a large crowd, and he had compassion on them for they were like sheep without a shepherd. And he began a long teaching session with them.

«'Go off by yourselves to a remote place and have some rest'. For there were so many people coming and going that the apostles had no time even to eat»

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Today, the Gospel proposes a situation, a need and a paradox; all, very real in our time, too.

The situation. The Apostles are “overworked”: «There were so many people coming and going that the apostles had no time even to eat» (Mk 6:30). Quite often we are facing the same kind of stress. Our work consumes a good share of our energy; the family, where each member seeks our love; the other activities which we are engaged in, which do good to us while benefiting third parties... If you wish... you can? Maybe it would be sounder admitting we cannot do all we would like to...

The need. Our body, our head and our heart have a need: to rest. In these few verses we have an often ignored manual about resting, where communication is emphasized. The Apostles «returned and reported to Jesus all they had done and taught» (Mk 6:30). Communication with God, following the thread of what is more cherished to our heart. And —o surprise!— we find God is already awaiting. And

He hopes to find us with our tiredness.

Jesus tells them: «Go off by yourselves to a remote place and have some rest» (Mk 6:31). In God's plans there is a place of rest! But there is more, as our whole existence, with all that entails, must rest in God. An anxious saint Augustine claims: «You made us for you and our heart is restless while not resting with You». God's rest is creative; not “anesthetic”: bumping into God's love focus on our heart and our thoughts.

The paradox. The Gospel scene has a “bad” ending: for the disciples cannot rest. God's plan fails: they are being approached by the crowd. They have not been able to “disconnect”. We often cannot get rid of our obligations either (children, wife, work...): it would be to betray ourselves! And yet, we must find God in these realities. If there is communication with God, if our heart rests in Him, we shall play down upon our useless tensions... and reality —free of chimeras— will better show God's sign. In Him, that's where we should rest!