Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time (B)

Gospel text (*Mk* 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.

«Come away by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while»

Fr. David AMADO i Fernández
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Today, the Gospel invites us to discover the importance of resting in the Lord. The Apostles were retuning from the mission on which Jesus had sent them. They cast out demons, cured the sick and preached the Gospel. They were tired and Jesus told them: “Come away by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while.” (Mk 6:31).

One of the temptations to which any Christian can succumb is that of wanting to do too many things and thus leaving the Lord a little to the side. The Catechism reminds us that, when it comes to prayer, one of the biggest dangers is that you can easily think that there are bigger, more important and more urgent things to be done, leading to a lack of care for the things of God. For this reason Jesus tells the Apostles, who have worked hard, are exhausted though euphoric because everything has gone so well, that they must rest. The Gospel says “they went off in the boat by themselves to a deserted place” (Mk 6:32).

To be able to pray properly you need at least two things: the first is to be with Jesus as He is the person with whom we are going to talk. Make sure that you are with Him. For this reason all times of prayer normally begin with an act of presence of God which is often the most difficult part. We must make ourselves conscious of the fact that we are truly with Him. The second thing is that we must be alone. If we really want to talk with someone, to have an intimate and profound conversation we choose to be alone with them.

Saint Peter Julian Eymard recommended that one should rest with Jesus after receiving Holy Communion. He warned of the danger of filling thanksgiving after Communion with many memorised words. He said

that, after receiving the Body of Christ, the best thing to do is to stay in silence for a while to regain our strength and to let Jesus talk to us in the silence of our hearts. Sometimes, rather than telling Him about our plans and projects it is better that we let Jesus instruct and encourage us.

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- “He, as God, is above suffering; he suffers because of his love for men. The emotion overwhelms him in his core. Not only is he moved, but he heals them of all their illnesses and frees them from all evil.” (Origen)

- “Jesus embodies God the Shepherd with his manner of preaching and his works, caring for the sick and sinners, for those who are “lost”, in order to bring them back to safety through the Father’s mercy” (Benedict XVI)

- “... Christ has become the head of this people, which henceforth is his Body. Around this center are grouped images taken "from the life of the shepherd or from cultivation of the land, from the art of building or from family life and marriage." (Catechism of the Catholic Church, № 753)