

16th Sunday in Ordinary Time

July 21, 2024: Jer 23:1-6 | Ps 23:1-6 | Eph 2:13-18
| Mk 6:30-34

Pray: Lord Jesus, help us prioritize prayer over activity and seek balance in our lives. Amen.

Jesus invites His disciples to rest in Him.

This Sunday's Gospel speaks volumes about Jesus' tender care of His apostles as they came bursting in from their first successful missionary excursion. After shadowing Him for so long, Jesus sent His disciples out on their own to preach, teach, heal, and drive out demons. Exhausted and full of excitement, can you imagine all the stories they had to share? Many people followed them and begged for their attention. Jesus loved the passionate hearts of His new missionaries, but He also knew what they needed most before sending them back out to serve. They needed to step away and physically and spiritually rest with Him.



This is a vital lesson for all Christians actively serving in ministry. Like the apostles, we need time with Jesus. No matter how many good works we do, loving God and others through our actions alone is not enough. We must reserve time to nurture our interior life as we seek divine union with Him. Nourishing our souls with Jesus in the Holy Eucharist also brings us oneness with the Lord. Prayer helps us remember that God is in power and control, not ourselves, and builds our trust in Him. It can be unhealthy and even

dangerous for our souls if we fail to put our relationship with Christ before everything else. We need personal, contemplative time with Jesus, the lover of our souls.

As the Holy Eucharist is the summit of our faith, our interior life – our personal relationship with God – is the foundation of our faith. It is here that we can truly know and love God. We can also share our joys, sorrows, and questions in prayer. We can ask the Holy Spirit to continue guiding and molding our hearts and actions into the same heart as Jesus. In prayer, we can sit in His presence – in praise, worship, and grace – and listen for God's Holy Will as He speaks to our hearts. This rest and renewal of our souls is like putting gas in our spiritual tanks to fuel more of God's love and action through us. We should prioritize our contemplative life – falling deeper into knowing and loving God – as this is the life we will one day enjoy in heaven. Our active life of love and service will naturally flow from this as we learn to see God more clearly in others.

Reflect & Discuss:

- † What are you doing to deepen your interior life with God?
- † In what ways can too much service and not enough prayer time be a problem?
- † How can physical and spiritual rest help your relationship with God and others?