

Fr. Martin's Reflection – July 21, 2024

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Our Gospel passage today is not meant to be understood as an argument against apostolic havens or holidays but rather serves to highlight the urgent love of Jesus for people in need. Jesus' original plan for the apostles underlines the importance of spending time apart and the value of rest and recovery. The apostles are not automatons; they must rest sometime. If no rest is ever taken, if no time is ever reserved for recovery and renewal, the apostle will simply end up a burnt-out case with nothing to offer but his guilty exhaustion. And that offer is no good to any crowd.

We all need to get away, to be by ourselves, to have our time of quiet. We can easily accept the impulse to go off by one's self, so long as it is expressed by writers and artists and others. For many of us, however, solitude is commonly seen as a state of pain. It is something to run from as we hunt down companionship and things to do. Let one half of a married couple retire to another room, shut the door and gaze fixedly at a far wall, and the other half is likely to pursue with the anxious question, "Are you sick?" or "Why are you mad at me?"

Sometimes when we find ourselves alone we don't know how to cope. Like the New York journalist who discovered how little prepared he was to cope with solitude when he was left rattling around his apartment for a weekend while his wife and children were away on a trip. "It wasn't so much a question of liking or not liking it," he recalled, "but simply feeling incompetent at it."

Solitude can make us uncomfortable; resting can make us feel guilty, especially if we have been brought up to honor a work ethic that equates idleness with laziness. Stillness is something we have to learn in time. For God speaks to us not only in the urgent cries of other people but also in the "still, small voice". And to hear that voice, we have to be at one with the stillness.

Retired Priests Special Collection

Next weekend, July 27-28, there will be a special collection for Retired, Elderly and Infirm Priests of our diocese. Through your generosity we are able to show our appreciation and care of these spiritual fathers.

Have a restful and blessed week.

Fr. Martin