

Well one of my favorite things to do is to travel and to see the world in all of its beauty. And so ever since I was young, I always loved learning about the world—I loved maps and world geography and I'm not trying to brag, but I even placed 4th in the state in the National Geographic Bee when I was in 8th grade. But I'd say in general my parents raised me and my three other siblings to be adventurous and to try new things, and especially new foods and so I just love experiencing different countries, different cultures, and cuisines. And I especially love experiencing the natural beauty of God's creation around the world.

So for me, travel is a great way to rest—*and we all need rest*. We all need to get away from time to time and be rejuvenated. We cannot work without rest. In fact, God made us to rest. For example, if we don't sleep and rest on a daily basis, then we're probably going to have a lot of serious health problems. Even God Himself rested when He became man in our Lord Jesus Christ. In fact, today's Gospel from Mark gives us an insight into just *how human* and *how busy* Jesus' life really was—being a popular preacher and teacher who was always on the move to different towns and cities, *Jesus was extremely busy*. So

much so that He invited His Apostles, who shared in His busy public ministry, to “Come away by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while.” Now for someone like myself who loves to travel, those words are music to my ears. And such words from our Lord Jesus are so timely given that we’re currently in the midst of summer and we’re going away on different trips and vacations with family and friends to try to rest and “recharge our batteries,” if you will.

Now this beautiful, rich invitation from Jesus to rest can be understood on different levels. Certainly, given the literal sense of His words, our Lord is explicitly encouraging us to *physically get away for a time*, if we can, in order to rest. But his invitation can also be understood according to its spiritual sense in that the Lord is lovingly inviting us to come away by ourselves and rest *in Him*. As the Good Shepherd, our Lord Jesus wants to give us genuine rest—*and not just any* rest, but a holistically fulfilling and revitalizing rest that gives us peace, joy, and freedom and enables us to bask in the gifts of truth, goodness, and beauty.

So when our Lord says, “Come away by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while” He’s not only inviting us to physically go somewhere to rest, but even more importantly, He’s inviting us to rest *through, with, and in Him*—to come away and *be with Him* and *to encounter Him, most especially* through prayer, the sacraments, good spiritual reading, and His Church. *Brothers and sisters, the “best rest” is in Jesus.* In fact, our merciful and compassionate Savior emphatically invites us to *rest in Him* saying, “*Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest.* Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart; and you will find rest for yourselves. For my yoke is easy, and my burden light.”

In the midst of our crazy, busy lives with so many things to do at work and at home and with so much stress, anxiety, and pressure between work and family life, Jesus is trying to cut through all of the noise in our lives and say, “I love you. Come away and rest in Me and let me gracefully rejuvenate you.” And the rest that Jesus wants to give us through prayer, the sacraments, spiritual reading, His Church, and creation is a holistic rest that satisfies both our mind and our heart, our

body and our soul. And the rest that Jesus wants to give us infuses us with great peace, joy, and hope. In fact, St. Paul in our second reading today from His Letter to the Ephesians reaffirms this by saying, ***Christ “is our peace.”*** And the peace that Jesus gives is not a worldly peace that’s defined by the absence of conflict—but rather it’s an even greater, more satisfying peace that’s defined by reconciliation with our Heavenly Father—***by a loving union with God!***

Brothers and sisters, it bears repeating: the ***best rest is in Jesus*** and we experience this rest ***most especially*** through prayer, the sacraments, Christ’s Church and Her teachings, good spiritual reading, and the magnificence of God’s creation. So in light of our Lord Jesus’ invitation to each of today to come away by ourselves and rest a while, we have to ask ourselves: am I truly getting enough rest in my life, in every sense of the word, but most especially am I resting in the Lord? On Sunday, the Lord’s Day, also known as our Sabbath Day, do we truly find meaningful, rejuvenating rest, by spending quality time with God, family, and friends? Or do I waste Sundays by doing a lot of unnecessary work for long periods of time?

Parents, grandparents, and Godparents: are you leading by example and finding rest in the Lord through prayer, the sacraments, good spiritual reading, or God's creation? Are we teaching our children how to properly rest, and *most importantly how to rest in our Lord Jesus* through daily prayer, fruitful silence, the sacraments, and Eucharistic Adoration? You know Eucharistic Adoration is like a little oasis of prayerful silence where we can encounter the Lord and experience the rest He wants to give us. Brothers and sisters, if we're *too busy to pray*, then we're *just too busy* and something needs to change.

Do we allow the Lord to give us rest by putting down and turning off our phones and Ipads? Or do our phones and other technological devices control us and determine our day-to-day life? I saw a thought-provoking meme on Facebook that said: "People are prisoners of their phones. That's why they are called 'cell phones.'" Brothers and sisters, sadly given the state of our culture in 2018, isn't this true many times? We can become so attached to our "*cell*" phones that they can seriously "*imprison*" us and prevent us from experiencing authentic, and much-needed rest, especially rest in the Lord. We can fill our daily lives with

so much noise and distraction, whether it's from TV, the radio, the internet, social media, etc. that we can't hear the voice of our Lord Jesus, the Good Shepherd, calling to us and inviting us to rest in Him and be rejuvenated by His grace.

Brothers and sisters, as we prepare to worship and receive our merciful Savior in the Most Holy Eucharist today, let's plead with him for the grace to respond wholeheartedly to His invitation for us to come away and rest a while, knowing that the famous words of St. Augustine ring eternally true: "You have made us for Yourself oh Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in You."