

# SUNDAY, JULY 19, 2009

## 16<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time

### Gospel: Mark 6:30-34



Today's Gospel speaks about a perennial problem. It is the matter of balance... balance between action, activity, or busyness and rest, being still or slowing down.

The apostles have been involved in preaching, teaching and healing. The needs of people are far greater than the limits of their energies. They have been giving, giving and giving. Jesus wisely discerns that the apostles need a break. They need to slow down and rest. They need a fresh supply of energy if they are to continue to help build the kingdom of God. Otherwise, they will burn out. So what does Jesus say after listening to their stories of missionary activity? "Come away by yourselves to a deserted place and rest awhile." Easier said than done.

In our culture and society we are a "can do" people. We are action oriented. We've had sayings and expressions that support the attitude of staying busy, of constantly being active and on the go. Lots of doing, doing, doing. Remember these "oldies but goodies". "Idleness is the devil's workshop." "Busy hands are happy hands." "So much to do; so little time."? Well, a great amount of good has been accomplished as the result of our action, busyness and activity. What Jesus is encouraging among the apostles and us is some balance. And that is where the invitation to rest comes in.

Summertime can often be a season when we take advantage of opportunities to "smell the roses." We may walk and enjoy the sights of beauty in our midst. We may sit and have conversations which renew and revitalize us. We may treat ourselves to "cat Naps". On particularly hot and humid days we may be so limited in our energy that we "take it easy" because that's the best we can manage. We harness our resources.



Drawing by Maximino Cerezo Barredo, circa 1999.

My sisters and brothers, this week pay attention to the times we rest, relax, unwind, and lay low. Enjoy these moments. Take in some deep breaths of God's gift of fresh air. Smile when we exhale. We are being refreshed. And know that even though we have a day of rest each week called Sunday in our Christian tradition, there are moments of each day when we, like the apostles, need to pause and rest. Not only is it Jesus' invitation to us; it is one way we can have some balance in our very busy and full days.

And an added bonus we have is this: resting in our daily life is a rehearsal and preparation for the gift for which we all long at the completion of our lives on earth... eternal rest. Why not give rest a chance... beginning today?