

GOSPEL MESSAGE

July 21, 2024

LECTIONARY 16

Sacred Rest

The action-packed book of Mark may serve as an important reminder that faith is an embodied reality, shaping how we live, move, and interact in this world. An active faith looks like an unapologetic pursuit of justice, mercy, and healing for all in need. There was and still is no shortage of work to be done in the name of Christ. So, what do we make of Jesus' invitation to "come away . . . and rest awhile"?

In a society that values hustle and productivity above all else, true rest is profoundly countercultural. And yet, rest as a discipline has much to teach us about faith and life. Perhaps most importantly, rest reminds us that we are not God. It requires faith that God is still making all things new even while we step back for our own healing and nourishment. Rest reminds us that we do not bear the salvation of the world on our shoulders. This is good news!

Additionally, taking time to rest has the potential to restore us to community, by reminding us of our rightful place in the body of Christ. We are but one part among many, which allows us to approach our work with more freedom and joy than we ever could alone. We are called to do the work of ministry in community: we all alternate rest, work, and play so that, collectively, we can move toward liberation for all God's beloved creation.

We may find this sacred rest in many places, but perhaps one such instance is in worship. Here, we come away to be with our God and each other. We feast together. We celebrate, contemplate, and praise. We remember who we are and whose we are. And then, rested and nourished, we are sent back out—to go in peace, to share the good news, and to continue to serve our neighbors in Christ's name.

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