

## 16th Sunday Year B

### MASTER THE FINE ART OF RETREAT

*Jeremiah 23:1-6   Ephesians 2:13-18   Mark 6:30-34*

#### HOMILY

Jesus had sent out his disciples two by two on a challenging mission to cast out devils, heal and preach repentance. On this is grounded the Mission of the Church. The outcome of this Mission was a great success, and the disciples were highly excited, wanting to share with Our Lord what they had done but then, Jesus didn't waste time listening to their stories in preference to inviting them to a lonely place where they would not be disturbed by crowds.

This helps us to draw lessons on what goes with a good mission. Giving, serving and doing are all well and good, but, just as we all know, it is worthless to keep on writing cheques unless we take the time to put some money in the bank. It is certainly worthless to keep on lowering a bucket after the well has run dry. That is the point Jesus would like to score today. For those on mission, Jesus demonstrates the necessity of withdrawing. In fact wasn't this the advice God gave humankind from the very beginning of creation? Work six days and rest one day He told our first parents. We all know the demands of the body for sleep and how sluggish we feel after a restless night. I think the Italians and Spaniards have got it right in religiously observing a siesta each day between 2 and 4 pm. That suits me very fine. A little nap in the afternoon is a must. If I don't get it, I feel sluggish and grumpy.

How right St. Benedict was when he guided his monks to obey the threefold rhythm of prayer, work and recreation. Everybody, including families need such a rhythm. Families need this rhythm. This can be very beneficial in many marriages for an occasional dinner out for husband and wife. Even if there is food at home and you could save some money by not going out, there are greater things to save than money. How urgently we need to learn this lesson of taking a break and relaxation. There surely comes a time when we must do

something else besides “trying a little harder.” We need insight, wisdom, power and spiritual reserves. Jesus had all of these, and much of His secret is written in the words of today’s Gospel, *“You must come away to some lonely place all by yourselves and rest for a while.”*

