

Homily on Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

We live in a progressive society that is always busy. People need to move, travel, rush and hurry. There are more people living on the street than living in a house. Every place is filled with people, full of vehicles, full of noise that makes us stressed and sometimes upset. We are always tense and no longer peaceful. In Bremond, the city is small, the life is slow and quite quiet; it is not like the big and busy cities as New York or Boston, but we are still busy with so many things else in our lives.

In our lives, two things always come together. There are rain and sun. Rain helps plants grow. Sunshine helps the fruit turn into the golden ripening season. Time has day and night. Day time is for people to work. Night time is for resting and restoring energy. Humans do not only have a private life but also a social life. Sometimes we have to go out with others. But sometimes, we have to go back into a quiet place to look at ourselves. Thus, human life consists of two things: labor and rest. Labor without rest will make us exhausted and bored. On the contrary, resting without labor, life will be meaningless and easily lead us to do evil things. In our spiritual life, spending the whole day of hard labor, we need the moments of rest with God through prayers and Masses ... to help our lives be balanced, full of joy and peace.

Conscious of that, not only in today's society but at the time of Jesus, it was the same. In today's Gospel, St. Mark narrates that Jesus was concerned and loved his disciples after they had a difficult journey of evangelization. Jesus, in his humanity, told them, "Come away by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while." (Mk 6:31). We know that with a busy life, our bodies tired easily and can put our minds into depression and nervous, breakdown.

In our family life, husbands are overworked, and can forget the necessity to spend more time with their wives and children; Someone lives in a stressful and busy environment, they forget the prior purpose for their life. Some of us pay more attention to earning money and ignore spiritual life. This is also Martha's mistake in the Gospel of St. Luke (10:38-42) when Jesus visited the home of Martha and Mary. Martha is too busy cooking to welcome the Lord and forgets the main purpose here. Why did Jesus visit her home? Because of love, not because of meals. So, the Lord complimented Mary for choosing the best part.

To work hard to live is good. It is the rule of life. But by that we forget our souls and forget God, it is not the way which God desires from us. Sometimes, we have to be alone and reflect on our lives, ask ourselves: how much love and service we have done for the Lord, as well as for others. So please give God a place in your soul, a moment to live with Him, otherwise God is only a distant image in our lives. St. Augustine has a very deep personal experience, he said, "The Lord is near me, but I don't realize that.

Previously I was looking for God everywhere and I did not see Him. However, when I came back to myself I saw God there. God is still there and always waiting for me. God is nearer to me than I am.”

Actually, rest here is not doing nothing. Rest is not only eating, drinking and relaxing. Sometimes, these things make us feel less energy than when we are not resting. Resting in the Gospel is “resting in the Lord,” “rest in God’s love.” Visiting the church every week, going on retreat or pilgrimage once a year, is a kind of the rest. Therefore, we can leave the business of daily life to find the silence and peace of our soul. It is taking time to look deeply into our inner selves, putting ourselves before the face of God. Letting Him act and guide us. If there are hours of rest, we will have the opportunity to listen to God. And we can tell God about ourselves, our families, our lives, our needs, our society... It is time that we are resting with God. And Jesus said, “Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest.” (Matt 11: 28-30).

In the Gospel today, we also find Jesus a very gentle and understanding person, He felt compassion for the people who were coming to hear his teachings. And “He began to teach them many things.” (Mk 6:34) It is happiness to be sheep under the care of a loving pastor like Jesus. He knows what we need before we realize it and he cares for us fully. Because sometimes our hearts are frozen and closed, let us ask God to give us a heart like his, a heart that is always ready to touch and open to the needs of others. In short, Jesus wants to remind us that after the hours of hard work, we should come to see our Lord, to be intimate with the Lord, to offer God our failures or successes since only the Lord can help us to maintain on our earthly journey. Thus, we will live a peaceful and happy life. When we feel peaceful, our hearts will be open to love God and love our brothers and sisters as God’s heart. Amen.