

SUNDAY PLUS

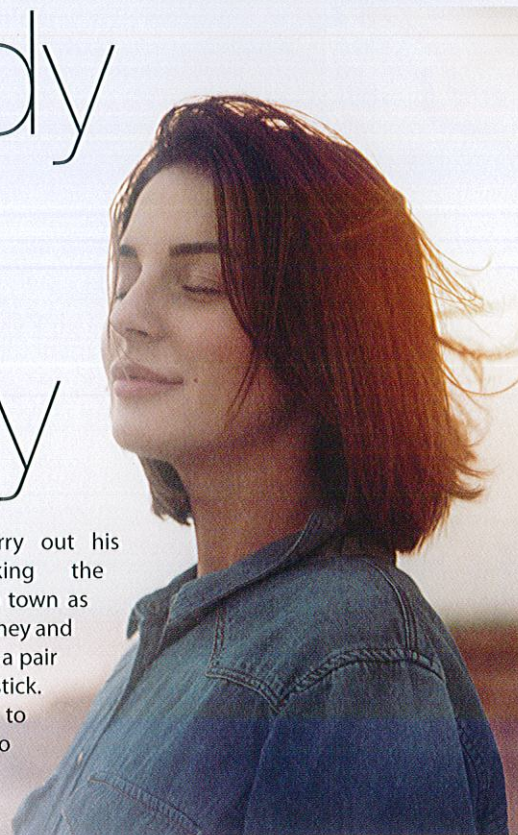
Take a break!

Everybody needs a holiday

by Mary Bell

Everybody needs a holiday and if we ever wanted proof of Jesus' humanity, this Gospel is it. His words to the disciples reveal his total understanding of what it means for people to be under stress, exhausted by their exertions. He knows they have had a gruelling

time trying to carry out his instructions: walking the roads from town to town as beggars with no money and with only one tunic, a pair of sandals and a stick. Their mission was to preach repentance to anyone who would listen, to anoint the sick and cast



out demons. Many times they must have encountered rejection. They have earned their holiday in a quiet place and he attempts to give them space to recuperate.

Alas, celebrity then was like it is now. Jesus is like a magnet, attracting all-comers. The crowds are there before them and it is a mark of Jesus's love of people and deep compassion that he does not send them away. He tends them like the Good Shepherd that he is because caring for all his followers is an essential part of his nature.

However, we should remember Our Lord's words whenever we feel guilty about resting. Jesus knew that people need a break from the rigours of life in order to be able to carry on with the important things. To remain quiet, to meditate, to do nothing at all is a God-given gift to the human spirit: "Come to me all you who labour and are burdened and I will give you rest."

Mary Bell is a grandmother and a retired teacher who continues to use her skills in the University of the Third Age.

Space in busy-ness

by Gráinne Treanor

We often imagine that life in the past was slower than it is today. Children strolled home from school and stayed home for the evening. Fewer people endured long commutes to work. Shops closed on Sundays, and there was a distinctive "Sunday feel" – quiet, unrushed, even reverent.

Today's Gospel tells us that even the disciples were so busy they had no time to eat, and Jesus told them they needed to retreat to some lonely place and rest for a while.

Some of us were forced into that situation with the arrival of Covid-19 in 2020. Yet despite the terrible circumstances, the break gave many of us the space in our "busy-ness" to reflect on what

mattered in life. Some of us vowed never to become so rushed again, even if that's easier said than done. Jesus reminds us in today's Gospel that we all need "some lonely place".

Gráinne Treanor is a mother of three and professional editor/proofreader who works from her home in the west of Ireland.

Loving Lord, I'm glad that you also knew what it was like to be achingly tired and desperate for a break. Help me to keep the balance between work and play. ☩ Amen.

Food for the soul

by Sr Janet Fearn
FMDM

We'd just finished an extremely busy week in the Pastoral Centre: four consecutive school groups, their visits separated by the few hours in which all the rooms had to be cleaned and prepared for the next teenage invasion. However, the departure of the last group signalled the onset of a day reunion of more than 100 participants in the diocesan Lourdes pilgrimage. As I tiredly presented the latest visitors with coffee and biscuits, an elderly lady declared, "It must make such a lovely change to have people visit you!" Hah!

People and their various needs can be extraordinarily tiring. It's easy to imagine Jesus' exhaustion because of the constantly

demanding crowds who appeared whenever he did.

Even Jesus needed time for himself, to enjoy a few minutes of uninterrupted silence, confident that, for a few minutes at least, he could enjoy peace and quiet. If he sought food for his soul, how much more should I also make space in my busy-ness!

Sr Janet Fearn is a Franciscan Missionary of the Divine Motherhood.

"Lord, teach us to step outside ourselves. Teach us to go out into the streets and manifest your love."

Pope Francis

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

Monday:
Exodus 14:5-18
Matthew 12:38-42

Tuesday:
Exodus 14:21-15:1
Matthew 12:46-50

Wednesday:
Exodus 16:1-5, 9-15
Matthew 13:1-9

Thursday:
Song of Songs 3:1-4
John 1:1-2, 11-18

Friday:
Exodus 20:1-17
Matthew 13:18-23

Saturday:
Exodus 24:3-8
Matthew 13:24-30

Next Sunday:
2 Kings 4:42-44
Ephesians 4:1-6
John 6:1-15