

Fourteenth Sunday of the Year

Get some rest!

It is not always easy being told to go to bed when it's still daylight and there seems so many interesting things to do and adults are still up and about. But at this time of year it might happen often as it stays light so much longer. That said sleep and rest are important for our health and well-being, but I do not think this is the rest that Jesus is talking about in this Sunday's Gospel story. Jesus said, "*I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.*" Jesus is talking about that special part of us which makes us who we are and helps us to identify others. When someone is describing another person's character to us, even though we cannot see them we can say 'I think you are talking about Mary' or 'I think you are talking about Jack'. We can even say that about Jesus. If I say there was once a man who cured the sick, walked on water and rose from the dead to live forever, we might say 'I think you are talking about Jesus'. But as we have just said about 'Mary' and 'Jack' it is not just about what we do, but who we are.

So, this Gospel story is also interesting not just because Jesus invites us to rest in a special way – we will return to that later – but also as Jesus gives a personal description of himself. He says, "*I am gentle and humble in heart.*" It is different from the other descriptions he gives about himself in the Gospels, such as "*I am the bread of life*" or "*I am the light of the world*". Gentleness describes someone who is kind to others and a humble person someone who does not believe they are more important than everyone else. Although we believe that Jesus is the most important person in our lives, we know he will not treat us badly. That is why we should not be frightened of him. When we pray Jesus is listening to us in a kind way and has time to spend with us – he would never say 'go away, I am too busy at the moment' – he has time for us.

So, what sort of rest does Jesus give us? First, he gives us rest from those things we might find difficult. If someone says something nasty to us or about us, we know that Jesus loves us just for being us! We can feel secure. We may have to improve on the way we behave at times but that is a normal part of being human. Second, Jesus forgives us and helps us to say sorry and put things right. He encourages us to say sorry and encourages other people to accept our apologies. He gives us grace (a special strength in ourselves) to say sorry and help to clear up what we have done wrong. Finally, he helps us. When we pray about things Jesus can help us think about things in good ways we never have before. All this can bring us rest from some of things that cause us trouble and difficulty.

God bless you, Canon David