

St Pius & St Anthony 16th Sunday Ordinary Time Year B2

The apostles just couldn't wait, to get home to tell Jesus how well their missions went. Maybe especially since Jesus sent them out with the odds seemingly against them. He had told them not to take any supplies along with them, and he indicated to them that they would be rejected ('count on it, but shake it off'). So, today Mark 6:30 says they "reported all they had done and taught..." Since they were successful, I am sure that couldn't wait to tell that good news too! I like how Luke 10:7 tells of the disciples returning to Jesus, exuberant with joy, almost boasting, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us because of your name." When I hear this, I picture the scene much like when children accomplish something-maybe good grade at school or a big score on their team, they can't hold it in, like they are bursting at the seams to tell someone-, well, everyone! I remember once that happening to me as a kid: I thought I would die before I got a chance to tell my older brother what I did once with grandad. To set this story up, a little background is that when I was little kid, bicycles were our 'everything'-our world. We biked to the park, biked to the arcade, we even rode in circles in our own yard even. We raced them, we jumped ramps with bikes, we even washed them (and what kid likes to wash anything?) But the big deal to share or show with bikes was when we could do tricks! Like riding no hands, or 'pulling your first wheelie' and then next, was holding it, how long could you ride up on one wheel. Whenever you accomplished a new trick, you told everybody!

Well, what happened with my grandad was that my dad & mom, and little brother had been at the farm, and grandad had taken me with him, to check the barn way out in field, so we drove one of his small tractors. On way back to house, he let me drive (that was a first, too, but it gets better). Everything went smooth: I drove and we passed thru gates 'open-close' them and then when we came up to park the tractor in barn. It was an incline and as he stepped off side to open door, he told me pull forward, and of course, as soon as I let up foot on brake, tractor started rolling back, and instead of slowing letting clutch out, I let it all out at once, and the front wheels of tractor popped up – I thought four feet? But that was a 'wheelie'. I'd done a wheelie on tractor - like at the county fair truck pulls! *(Of course, it was teaching moment—too--he let me know how dangerous that could be, without any rollover bar or implement attached, but to a kid with little sense of real world, I popped a wheelie like the drag race cars do at the strip)* So, all the way riding home with mom & dad, my heart beat over 200 times a minute, as I couldn't wait to get home and excitedly tell my brother that I 'popped a wheelie' with tractor! ***I am sure my parents couldn't wait for me to get home too so that I would stop***

talking about it, too! And I imagine the apostles have such a similar excitement and joy waiting to tell Jesus all about their mission adventure!

And maybe precisely because of their successes and amped up (excited) attitude, Jesus wants them to slow down and take a break. He wants them to rest and retreat—to let the whole experience really soak in. Of course, Jesus is right there with them to debrief them and process it all, as preparation for future missions. Yet, also he is teaching them, like the old Chicago song, *“Everybody needs a little time away.”* This command to recharge themselves, is a common lesson that Jesus not only teaches by what he says, but He teaches it by example so often in the gospels. Jesus regularly went off to the mountain, seashore, or garden/groves to pray alone, away from the crowd. Luke 5:16 even records that this was a **custom** of His, *“he would withdraw to deserted places to pray.”* Jesus sets the pattern for us. We have to run a ‘restore’ program for ourselves, or else we will just run out!

Yet we find such a wisdom in allowing ourselves a rebuild or refresh period, every week or every day, even from the beginning of the bible. We see in Genesis 2:3, that God established the ‘Sabbath’ day of rest: an example of God building into creation a ‘recovery phase’—scheduling it in. A sabbath a week for the refreshment of body/soul, like how we rest in sleep each night, so then also once a week we take a little longer to rejuvenate-reenergize our spirits. *(I see this like how farmers know not to overwork a field, allowing every couple of years, the field to lay fallow not planting anything in it to let the soil replenish its own nutrients - or as I like to say to employers, ‘Make sure to give your workers a break, since even your machines get their needed maintenance with regular repair cycles or annual shutdowns for part replacements.)* So, Jesus reminds His apostles that they cannot give, what they do not have, and they need good downtime to pray/reflect and give God time to infuse them with gifts/spirit that they can then dispense in ministry, refreshed and renewed after their spiritual siesta.

Such a timeout is vital to keeping up our energy. I’m sure we have all had the experience of dragging on in work too long and realizing, ‘It is not supposed to be this hard’. That the more we tire, then the more difficult the work becomes (& we are less efficient or effective too). They call that ‘diminishing returns’, when it starts to take twice as long to do half our previous work rate. I find too, that it is often at that point in the job, when things tend to break *(Not that I frustratedly threw it at the wall---it just broke itself, right?-is that my excuse?)*. So yes, Jesus is telling us, or commanding us to **‘Come away by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while’** (Mk 6:31). Jesus helps us draw back in, our scattered energies, or depleted resources, bringing us back into focus. Refreshing us! Don’t we all need that?