

Jesus said to his disciples: 'Come away...and rest a while.'
Come into the Lord's presence now, away from the burdens and stresses of life.
Come with open arms, and receive the rest that Jesus offers to restore our souls,
and equip us for whatever comes next.

**God, my loving Father, who gently guides and leads me,
restore my souls today as I come to worship you.**

Let me not hurry, but sit at your feet, gazing upon your lovely face.

Amen.

Sing or Read:

- 1 Jesus Christ, I think upon your sacrifice,
you became nothing, poured out to death.
Many times I've wondered at your gift of life,
and I'm in that place once again.
And I'm in that place once again.

*And once again I look upon
the cross where you died,
I'm humbled by your mercy
and I'm broken inside.
Once again I thank you,
once again I pour out my life.*

- 2 Now you are exalted to the highest place,
King of the heavens, where one day I'll bow.
But for now, I marvel at this saving grace,
and I'm full of praise once again.
I'm full of praise once again.

Refrain

Thank you for the cross,
thank you for the cross,
thank you for the cross, my Friend.
Thank you for the cross,
thank you for the cross,
thank you for the cross, my Friend.

Refrain

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**Gracious God, you always make time for me;
I am sorry that I don't always make time for you.
When I am rushing around being busy, sometimes even when I am doing your work,
I forget about you.
I am sorry when I make my lives so full that there is no room left for you,
no room to get away, to be in a quiet place with you.
Forgive me, Lord, and help me not to hurry but to slow down,
to make space for you to dwell within me.**

And in that dwelling place, may I seek what you want me to do and who you want me to spend time with.

Help me to get the right balance, a right rhythm that is in tune with you. Amen.

Assurance of forgiveness

Even though I have gone astray, you are my Shepherd, the one who brings us back to the fold. I am assured of your forgiveness, and I am set free in the knowledge that you always make room for me. Amen.

Sing or Read

- 1 The Lord's my shepherd, I'll not want ;
he makes me lie in pastures green,
he leads me by the still, still waters,
his goodness restores my soul.
*And I will trust in you alone,
and I will trust in you alone,
for your endless mercy follows me,
your goodness will lead me home.*
- 2 He guides my ways in righteousness,
and he anoints my head with oil ;
and my cup — it overflows with joy,
I feast on his pure delights.
- 3 And though I walk the darkest path —
I will not fear the evil one,
for you are with me, and your rod and staff
are the comfort I need to know.

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In this week's Gospel, Jesus' disciples return from their mission and gather around Jesus to tell him about what they have done. Their peace and quiet is interrupted again by the crowd of people following Jesus, and Jesus can't help but show them compassion.

Mark 6:30-34,53-56 The apostles gathered around Jesus, and told him all that they had done and taught. He said to them, "Come away to a deserted place all by yourselves and rest a while." For many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat. And they went away in the boat to a deserted place by themselves. Now many saw them going and recognized them, and they hurried there on foot from all the towns and arrived ahead of them. As he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd; and he began to teach them many things.

When they had crossed over, they came to land at Gennesaret and moored the boat. When they got out of the boat, people at once recognized him, and rushed about that whole region and began to bring the sick on mats to wherever they heard he was. And wherever he went, into villages or cities or farms, they laid the sick in the marketplaces, and begged him that they might touch even the fringe of his cloak; and all who touched it were healed.

Reflection: This week, the Gospel reading consist of short pieces of text that are often overlooked because they are the connecting verses between more prominent well-known stories. The action takes place around the Sea of Galilee, which is an inland sea – rather like

a large Scottish loch. If someone had access to a boat, it would be easy therefore to row or sail across to the other side. Unfortunately, because of the hilly ground all around, anyone watching from the shore would also have a good view of your progress and could make a good guess as to where you were going to land. And because rowing is not the fastest form of transport, someone could make the journey on foot and be there to greet you. This is what happened when Jesus took his disciples away to a quiet place to rest. The crowds got there before them.

Jesus seems to have been recognised and followed by crowds wherever he went, with little time to rest or even eat on occasions. No wonder that his desire, for himself and for his disciples, was to get away and have some 'me time' – even though his plans were somewhat thwarted.

Busyness – with all its attendant stresses – is a common problem. For some people, the idea of rest as a way of moving on – 'retreating in order to advance' – is too counterintuitive. If I take time off or away, I'll only have twice as much to do when I get back! But putting yourself first is not always the wrong thing to do. Anyone who has flown in an aeroplane will know that you have to put on your own oxygen mask before trying to help someone else. Looking after yourself puts you in a better position to show compassion to others.

So, where do you go to for your spiritual 'me time'? Indeed, do you seek rest when you most need it?

Discipleship involves being invited into the mission of Christ to develop a new human community in which divisions between us are broken down. This is a very different, supra-human form of community, a community centred on Christ. This mission begins with a sense of being called by Jesus and sent out, to learn by doing. It can cost lives and time is short, so it is important to seize God's moment and act. We can't for ever prevaricate. However, we need power and support in this mission, so Christ gathers us back, to tell the stories and support each other, and this shapes the rhythm of our worship as we offer ourselves, our sense of calling, and God's mission to God in worship. The final verses paint a picture of people recognising that Jesus meets their deepest needs and flocking to have their lives transformed by him. This picture gives us confidence in the mission God calls us to be involved in.

Q How good are we at listening to what others have to say?

Q What is needed to build communities where people listen to each other so they can develop a shared vision?

Let us pray

We pray for people of other cultures who live among us.

Thank you for the richness that they can bring to our lives.

We pray for people who feel excluded for reasons of race, culture, colour, or anything that makes them feel 'bad different' and not 'good different'.

We pray for our fellow citizens of earth and heaven.

We pray for countries at war, for the people who suffer, perhaps not even understanding what the fighting is all about. Bring them hope, Lord.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God.

We pray for those who deliberately go into danger to negotiate for peace,

and for ourselves that we might bring God's peace to our neighbours.

We pray for our fellow citizens of earth and heaven. Amen

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your Name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.**

Give us today our daily bread.

**Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.**

**Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.**

**For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours,
now and for ever. Amen.**

Sing or Read:

My Jesus, my Saviour,
Lord there is none like you.
All of my days I want to praise
the wonders of your mighty love.
My comfort, my shelter,
tower of refuge and strength,
let every breath, all that I am,
never cease to worship you.

*Shout to the Lord all the earth, let us sing,
power and majesty, praise to the King.
Mountains bow down
and the seas will roar
at the sound of your name.
I sing for joy at the work of your hands.
Forever I'll love you, forever I'll stand.
Nothing compares to the
promise I have in you.*

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O God, in Scripture we read that you rested on the seventh day – after all the busyness and work of creation; and we read of Jesus' desire for his disciples to rest. As your followers, your disciples, now, and as we return to our busy lives, may we know the rest you offer every day of this week. Amen.

The Blessing of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit, be with you, with those you love and with those you ought to love this day and forever more. Amen

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Pauline". The signature is written in dark ink on a light-colored background.