

SIXTEENTH SUNDAY - B - JULY 19, 2015

"COME AWAY BY YOURSELVES TO A DESERTED PLACE AND REST A WHILE".....

WHEN HE DISEMBARKED AND SAW THE VAST CROWD HIS HEART WAS MOVED WITH PITY FOR THEM AND HE BEGAN TO TEACH THEM...."

I ALSO READ RECENTLY IN AN EXCELLENT BOOK ON PRAYER, WRITTEN BY JOAN CHITTISTER ENTITLED "THE BREATH OF THE SOUL"

IF I RECALL CORRECTLY, ABOUT 2 1/2 YRS AGO, JORGE BERGOGLIO, THEN 76 YRS OF AGE WROTE HIS LETTER OF RESIGNATION AS THE ARCHBISHOP OF BUENOS AIRES BEFORE LEAVING FOR ROME AND WAS PLANNING ON SUBMITTING IT TO THE NEW POPE AFTER THE ELECTION BY THE CARDINALS...

IN OTHER WORDS, HE WAS PLANNING ON HEADING OFF TO A DESERTED PLACE AND RESTING AWHILE IN RETIREMENT WHEN HE ENTERED THE SISTINE CHAPEL FOR THE ELECTION OF A NEW POPE IN MARCH OF 2013 WE ALL KNOW THE REST OF THAT STORY.....

INCLUDING WHEN HE EMERGED ON THE BALCONY HE SAW THE VAST CROWD - ASK FOR A MOMENT OF SILENCE SO THEY COULD PRAY FOR HIM AND NO DOUBT HIS HEART WAS MOVED WITH PITY AND LOVE..... AND HIS HEART CONTINUES TO BE MOVED AS HE CONTINUES TO SEE VAST CROWDS....

THE LATEST BEING CROWDS IN ECUADOR, BOLIVIA AND PARAGUAY SO MUCH FOR GOING AWAY IN RETIREMENT TO A DESERTED PLACE AND RESTING FOR A WHILE....

WHEN I REFLECT ON THE GOSPEL STORY TODAY....

*THE EVENTS OF THIS PAST WEEK FOR ME SEEM LIKE SOMETHING OF A
COINCIDENCE.....*

*I THINK MANY OF YOU KNEW THAT I WAS PLANNING ON GOING WITH A
FELLOW MARIANIST TO A FRIEND'S HOUSE ON A LAKE NEAR
KNOXVILLE, TENN FOR THIS PAST WEEK FOR A VACATION*

I WAS NOT EVEN PLANNING ON BEING HERE TODAY....

*THEN MY BROTHER IN LAW. KEVIN, WHO HAD BEEN IN THE HOSPITAL
TOOK A TURN FOR THE WORSE, THE DECISION WAS MADE TO FINALLY
BRING HIM HOME AND PUT HIM UNDER HOSPICE CARE -*

OBVIOUSLY I NEEDED TO CHANGE MY PLANS....

IT WAS A "NO BRAINER", AS WE SAY....

WE ARE ALL FACED WITH SIMILAR SITUATIONS, AREN'T WE....???

MAYBE NOT QUITE AS DRAMATIC AS THESE TWO EXAMPLES....

BUT EVERY BIT AS REAL....

AS I'VE SAID BEFORE, LIFE IS ALL ABOUT HOW WE HANDLE PLAN B....

*I'M SURE PARENTS DEAL WITH THESE KINDS OF SITUATIONS ALL THE
TIME....*

*LOOKING FOR SOME "ME TIME" FOR YOURSELF WHEN YOU ARE FACED
WITH A SITUATION CALLING FOR SOME "WE TIME".....*

*IT'S ALSO A GOOD EXAMPLE OF HOW LOVE AND SUFFERING GO
TOGETHER, GO HAND IN HAND.....*

THEY ALWAYS HAVE AND THEY ALWAYS WILL....LOVE AND SUFFERING...

THAT IS HOW WE GROW...BEYOND OURSELVES...

OF COURSE, WHEN LOVE IS PRESENT THE SUFFERING SEEMS

ALMOST INCIDENTAL AND HARDLY AN ISSUE...

"HIS HEART WAS MOVED WITH PITY, FOR THEY WERE LIKE SHEEP WITHOUT A SHEPHERD; AND HE BEGAN TO TEACH THEM....."

OF COURSE, WE DON'T ALWAYS RESPOND LIKE A GOOD SHEPHERD DO

WE?

WE HEAR ABOUT THAT IN OUR FIRST READING...

"WOE TO THE SHEPHERDS WHO MISLEAD AND SCATTER THE FLOCK OF MY PASTURE, SAYS THE LORD"....

UNFORTUNATELY WITHIN OUR OWN CHURCH WE HAVE HAD SOME

DRAMATIC EXAMPLES OF THAT IN RECENT TIMES

PRIESTS AND BISHOPS - SEXUAL ABUSE AND COVER-UP...

MORE CONCERN ABOUT THE REPUTATION OF THE INSTITUTION THAN

THE WELFARE OF A YOUNG VULNERABLE VICTIM....

WE'VE HAD BISHOPS RESIGN IN KANSAS CITY, IN MINNEAPOLIS

RECENTLY AND A TRIAL SCHEDULED IN THE NEAR FUTURE IN THE

VATICAN....

SOME TIMES IT'S QUITE A CHALLENGE BEING A GOOD SHEPHERD.....

THAT'S CERTAINLY ONE THING I'VE LEARNED SINCE BEING A PASTOR, A

PRIEST COORDINATOR IN THIS COMMUNITY....

I DEFINITELY HAVE MORE COMPASSION FOR PASTORS THAN I EVER HAD

BEFORE....

*I'M SURE THAT YOU E.G. AS PARENTS REALIZE WHAT A CHALLENGE IT IS
AT TIMES BEING A GOOD SHEPHERD...*

*AND IF YOU HAVE RESPONSIBILITY FOR OTHERS IN ANY WAY, ESP.
YOUTH AND THE VULNERABLE, LIKE EDUCATION OR HEALTH CARE, YOU
APPRECIATE HOW DIFFICULT IT CAN BE AT TIMES -
BEING A GOOD SHEPHERD...*

*OF COURSE, IT GOES WITHOUT SAYING THAT IN SPITE OF WHAT I'VE SAID
IT IS ALSO NECESSARY AND VITALLY IMPORTANT AT TIMES TO "GO
AWAY BY OURSELVES TO A DESERTED PLACE AND REST FOR A WHILE"
ACHIEVING A BALANCED RHYTHM BETWEEN SHEPHERDING AND
ALLOWING OURSELVES TO BE SHEPHERDED IS CRITICAL....*

*A BALANCE BETWEEN CARING FOR OTHERS AND CARING FOR
OURSELVES CAN BE QUITE A CHALLENGE....*

*WE MUST KNOW WHEN IT IS TIME TO RENEW OURSELVES, TO REST, TO
REPLENISH OUR SPIRIT AND OUR ENERGY.....*

*SELF-GIVING AND REST ARE PARALLEL POLES IN THE DYING AND RISING
DYNAMIC OF WHAT WE CALL THE PASCHAL MYSTERY....*

TOO MUCH DYING CAN CRUSH US.....

TOO MUCH REST CAN LULL US AND DULL US

THE CHALLENGE IS TO HAVE A BALANCE IN OUR LIVES...

*REMEMBER THAT JESUS NO DOUBT EVENTUALLY GOT AWAY INTO THE
WILDERNESS WITH HIS DISCIPLES FOR THAT REST....*

WE KNOW FOR SURE THAT HE GOT AWAY WITH HIS CLOSEST FOLLOWERS

*DURING THAT FINAL CRISIS IN HIS LIFE TO SHARE WITH THEM THAT
LAST MEAL....*

THAT WAS CLEARLY VERY, VERY IMPORTANT TO HIM ...

IN FACT, HE WANTED TO BE REMEMBERED BY THAT MEAL....

*HE WAS ABLE TO SHARE WITH THEM, CARE FOR THEM AND EVEN WASH
THEIR FEET...*

*NO DOUBT IT WAS MEANINGFUL TO HIM, AS NOURISHING TO HIM AS IT
WAS TO THEM.....*

AS WE CONTINUE, WE REMEMBER AND CELEBRATE THAT VERY MEAL...

MAY WE APPROACH THE GOOD SHEPHERD AT THIS TABLE.....

*AND GIVE THANKS FOR THE GOOD SHEPHERDS WE HAVE HAD IN OUR
LIVES.... WHO HAVE BEEN MODELS FOR US....*

HOPEFULLY BEGINNING WITH OUR PARENTS

*LET US PRAY ESPECIALLY FOR THOSE SHEPHERDS IN OUR LIVES WHO WE
MAY NOT PARTICULARLY APPRECIATE...*

*AND FINALLY LET US PRAY THAT WE WILL BE GOOD SHEPHERDS AND
TRULY CARE FOR THOSE FOR WHOM WE SHEPHERD, E.G. OUR STUDENTS,
OUR PATIENTS, OUR CUSTOMERS, OUR CHILDREN, OUR GRANDCHILDREN
AMEN....*

