

SHEPHERD MUST NOT SLEEP ON THE JOB

Today, God is warning clergy and religious (Jer 23:1-6) not to forget that we work for Him alone. We have been given charge to gather the people into His Church and not have them scattered all over the place, ignorant of their salvation. We must preach the Truth and not be careless with our service or there will be serious consequences for us to pay on our day of Judgement. In today's Gospel (Mark 6:30-34), we see the Twelve disciples coming back from their tireless mission, full of excitement of what they taught the people. Jesus instructs them to come away with Him to *some lonely place and rest for a while*. Jesus' idea of rest is not just timeout from a busy world to eat, drink and sleep, but to also spend some hours with Him daily in contemplative prayer. This is why priests and religious take a vow to pray the Liturgy of the Hours (Breviary) every day. If we break that vow or other vows, then we will have a broken priesthood and a broken Church, with the result of the 'flock scattered' all over the place. If we do not take care of our own vocation daily, with private prayer and Eucharistic adoration, then we cannot properly take spiritual care of the vocation of the people placed in our charge. We must wear the harness of a routine prayer life.

RESPONSIBILITY MUST NEVER SLEEP

Peace comes from forgiving and reconciling with each other. In the second reading (Eph 2:13-18), St. Paul teaches us that Jesus is the Peace between the Father and us. In dying on the Cross and rising from the dead, Jesus gave us the Church and its Sacraments. Jesus made Himself available after the people followed Him. He did not hide or run away. In today's world, He again makes Himself available, not just in Mass, but also in the important sacrament of confession, provided that the shepherd (priest) makes himself available too. This sacrament brings about peace with God and in turn, with each other. Jesus teaches the crowd at some length and feeds them with the faith to go forth and bear the fruits of the Holy Spirit, which in turn, will bear an everlasting fruit in Heaven. These are the fruits of love, mercy, patience, purity, and peace. He would certainly have preached repentance, calling the people to change from their sinful way of life to a holy way of life guided by God. Jesus came to save us from Satan, the black shepherd, who sadly guides his misguided sheep to hell. That is the Truth but not every shepherd preaches this. Jesus calls us onto the path of holiness leading to heaven. The Mission of the Church is to feed the soul with Divine Wisdom and Truth by making everyone aware of the consequences of sin in this world and beyond it. The existence of hell has to be taught so that we can avoid it. The clergy and religious are charged with the mission to spiritually prepare souls for death and the Day of Judgement. Let us repent for our sins and live in anticipation for the new eternal world to come. God bless, Fr. Brendan.