



Wednesday Prayer

9th Sunday after Pentecost – Rest a while.

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.

Mark 6:30-34, 53-56

The disciples return to Jesus after they had been out in the villages, in homes, teaching and healing with the power Jesus had given them. No doubt coming back exhausted, Jesus suggests they get away for a while, leaving by boat to a deserted place to rest. Sounds lovely, right? We all need time to rest, recuperate, and take care of our own mental, emotional and physical well-being. But the people had now heard about this Jesus and hurried ahead, rushing to receive healing. Jesus responds with compassion, continuing to welcome all. “There’s never an escape from the suffering of the world.”¹

This week I was part of two distinct discussions focused on the need to care for oneself, while also being in a position where the needs of the community are so great it’s hard to “get away and rest”. The LSS Metro Homeless Youth Services leaders feel this tension as they work with young people whose needs are often critical. Their leadership shepherds youth into safety and supports their well-being. Jesus and the disciples see these critical needs as well as they travel through the villages. “These people are being denied well-being and justice, and the offense seizes Jesus.”²

The second discussion was through [MICAH’s \(Metropolitan Interfaith Council on Affordable Housing\) speaker’s bureau “We are your neighbors”](#). My church heard from three speakers who gave testimony about their lived experiences of homelessness and housing instability. These leaders are working tirelessly to change systems that have failed too many people in our communities, to work for justice, and to urge each one of us to live out our faith and values by addressing the needs of people experiencing homelessness and the housing crisis. They too, could use a time to get away and rest.

Healing God, give rest to all working for the good of our neighbors. Amen.

Written by Joy McElroy, Cherish All Children Executive Director.

^{1,2} [Commentary on Mark 6:30-34, 53-56 - Working Preacher from Luther Seminary](#)