

July 23, 2006
Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time
Fr. Larry Richards

Good Morning! Today we hear from Jesus. “Come by yourself to an out-of-the-way place and rest awhile.” This is a command of Christ – it is not an option. You know, so often we are very busy people, “I am a very person.” I know all of us are very busy. It is part of the reality of today’s world – we are very, very busy! You know, “I can’t help around the church because I’m busy. I can’t get involved in this thing because I am...busy. I can’t do this because I have too many things to do.” And we are very, very, very, very busy! And we kind of like it – it makes us feel important! And then we kind of hate it because we have that martyr complex and we say “oh, yes, I’ll do another thing, but it is always the same people...” and we kind of like that stuff. But what Jesus says is that we have to come with Him to an out-of-the-way place and rest awhile. And it has to be something – you know, I believe the greatest problem in the spiritual life is the lack of discipline, huh? Jesus teaches us...or not Jesus, but the word of God says “My people die because of lack of discipline.” Because the spiritual life is a discipline. You know we have discipline in all these other things in our life, we have discipline in what we eat, discipline in working out, discipline in exercise, discipline on studying or going to work or making sure I have enough, or whatever. We all have a discipline. But the main discipline we all need is the discipline in the spiritual life – spiritual discipline. And when Jesus looks at us and says “listen, I want you to come by yourself, to an out-of-the-way place and rest a little.” He does it with them. We can’t just rest by ourselves - we have to rest with Christ, because He is the one that is going to refresh us! But what that is going to take more than anything else is a disciplined prayer life! Now, a disciplined prayer life means that I give Him time in my day. And again, throughout the years, here or other places it is the same thing...did you pray yesterday? “Well Father, I tried.” And I always say “well, did you try to eat yesterday?” “Well, uh, oh no...” Isn’t that amazing, you ate yesterday. You weren’t even thinking about it, because eating was important to you! What is more important – eating or praying? Praying! You really don’t mean that and you know it! It’s reality that praying is more important than eating! If you stop eating, what happens? You die! If you stop praying, what happens? You die! Is it God’s fault? No! But see, most people see praying as another thing I have to do! I have to get my prayers in! And then prayer becomes a burden – it is not a discipline, and it’s like “oh I might do it, or, oh, I’m tired” because it doesn’t fulfill us! And the reason prayer doesn’t fulfill us is because we are always doing things! Prayer has to be where we go with Jesus and we rest a little! And we need to do this every day! You know, and again, people used to do it in a bad way years ago. Nobody – no parents here – but my father, before he came home to deal with the chaos of the home – guess where my father used to go? To the bar! You didn’t have fathers like that, did you? No, they would go to the bar first, stop and have a couple, and then go home do be able to deal with their family! Well, you can understand coming home to deal with me...he needed a couple! But the reality was, it didn’t make it good for him or for us! That what we need to do is before we go into the chaos of work, or the chaos of home, we need to find a place to rest with Jesus! Now, here, those that belong to this parish – it’s an easy thing, right? Five minutes before you go running to work – you don’t have to stop at a bar, you can stop at the church during the day, or go in

the chapel 24 hours a day – run in there – sit there for five minutes – rest awhile with Jesus. You don't have to do hours – you don't have to do fifty hours – five minutes, rest with Him – then, you go home WITH Jesus and deal with your family. Or, if the chaos for you is at work – “I can't stand to go to work” – well you make a detour here, you stop in the church, you go in there five minutes – you rest with Jesus, and then you go to work with Jesus. Five minutes, you can do it! What's it going to cost you? Discipline! You are going to have to make a decision that this is what you want to do! Now, for some of you it is impossible, but what you can do – “I can't come, Father, I live all the way in New York, and it won't happen.” Ok, then you have to create a place in your home to rest with Jesus. I have some good friends and they went and they took – they have a little closet in their house, and they made that closet their prayer closet. And every day, they take turns where they walk in there and spend five minutes and rest with Jesus. With Jesus! You see, resting in itself isn't going to do it for you! Taking a nap and avoiding life isn't going to do it for you! You have to rest with HIM! So, you have to find a place – do you have a place in your home where you can rest with Jesus? Is it a place you know – if that's the place you meet Jesus! Because you must do it – every day! And what it is going to take is discipline! Very simple – you have to decide – this is what I want, and this is what I am going to do, and I am going to do it every day! And you know you can do it. You do it for everything else, but the spiritual life is the most important. And when you go there to be with Jesus, don't fill it up with stuff, or you won't want to go! “Oh, I have to do more stuff with Jesus, just put another thing on my check marks...I prayed.” You go in there and you rest with Him. You do what we do at Mass, close your eyes, say Jesus hold me, and fee His arms come around you. Who doesn't need that? Every day - but it is going to take discipline – it will take you discipline. Discipline in the spiritual life is the most important thing. And when you and I go to that discipline, we need to rest. So please, create a space in your home today – find a place. For some of you it's going to be the bathroom - it's just going to be! Especially those with kids! You're going to go in there and they won't bother you for at least five minutes! So, you don't have to sit on the toilet to do it, you can put a chair in there and that is your place! No one will know – your husband won't know, your wife won't know – they are thinking you are in the bathroom! And when you are in the bathroom – you pray! You rest with Jesus! And let it be a place! But you have to find a place! If you have a lot of kids – you need a place more than other people need a place! You need a place to rest with Jesus. You have to do it or you are going to become nuts! More nuts! All of us need to rest with Jesus. You can do it, but it is going to cost you discipline. It's going to cost you time, and you have to decide that it is worth your time. Because if you do that, you will live forever! May each of you know His love today and forever. Amen.