

**July 21, 2024**

**16th Sunday in Ordinary Time: Rise and Shine**

*“Health is not just absence of disease, but a wholeness that involves physical, mental and spiritual well-being” Anon.*

Today's Gospel tells us that Jesus was in such demand that he and his apostles scarcely had time to eat. However, at some point he decided that enough was enough, and took the apostles off to a quiet place for a break.

Rest is very important in our life. By allowing our bodies time to recover, rest helps prevent injuries and improve overall performance. It also aids in muscle repair, reduces inflammation, and supports a healthy immune system. Additionally, rest helps manage stress levels and lowers blood pressure, contributing to a healthier heart.

The action of Jesus in the gospel of Mark 6:31 - showed how much he cared about his apostles. They had just come back from the mission on which he had sent them. He saw that they needed rest in order to get them invigorated, revitalized and refreshed, in the mind and body.

The health ministry (sector) has been creating the awareness on the importance of rest. People would say, “Take a break or have some rest.” Recently, Mental Health has taken over the center stage. But there is another important part of human health that is not talked about – **Spiritual Health**.

A person is spiritually healthy when he is able to find peace, hope and comfort in even the hardest of times. Spiritual health helps to support a person as he/she experience life completely. The basis of spirituality is discovering a sense of meaningfulness in one's life and coming to know the purpose of life. Many factors play a part in defining one's spiritual health status - religious faith, beliefs, values, ethics, principles and morals.

This week, the CWL (St. Michael's Parish) will be holding a spiritual health camp for our children – it is called ‘Rise and Shine Camp’. Children will be made to know and understand basic things about God:

- Jesus as a carpenter (Mark 6:3)
- Jesus, the Bread of Life (John 6:35)
- Jesus as a Healer (Matthew 14:14)

- Jesus loves the little children (Matthew 19:13-14)

The world today is quite opposite of what it used to be. Morality is nose-diving, violence everywhere. The storm is raging like a wounded lion, ravaging the world. Our children need to stay protected from all these. Children are gifts from God (Psalm 127:3). These precious gifts need guidance and care.

Caring is never easy. Some people are willing to care a little, provided they are in the mood, and it's not too inconvenient, and doesn't upset their own plans. But to care as Jesus did, when it does upset one's plans that's the real test. Parents do it all the time. How many times do they have to get out of bed at night to see to a child? All of us are capable of caring. When we care, we are living the Gospel.

Bryant McGill said, “the trees which are pruned, watered and nurtured by caring hands bears the greatest fruits; it is the same with people”

**Prayer: Lord, give us the grace to make your love and care visible in our neighbourhood. Jesus, I trust in you.**

Fr. Benjamin Ezekwudo