

SUNDAY PLUS

Time for what matters

Changed plans

By Sr Janet Fearnis FMDM

Jesus and the disciples were so busy that they needed a break. The demanding crowds had prevented them from even having time to eat. We can imagine their sighs of relief when Jesus told his disciples that they would all go away for a few days of peace and quiet by themselves. They didn't need to pack much food because, being fishermen, they could expect to catch enough fish for the next meal. They climbed into the boat and paddled away, planning to spend the next day or so busily doing nothing. However, despite Jesus' best intentions, when they pulled into shore, people had already guessed where they were going and arrived ahead of them. How the disciples' hearts must have sunk! We're not told if Jesus felt frustrated but we do hear that he felt sorry for the crowd. Recognising

that he was surrounded by many who needed his support and wisdom, he abandoned his plans for relaxation and instead, spoke to the crowd and healed those who were sick. He was the good shepherd who cared for his sheep.

A shepherd's life is never easy. He must always be willing to go the extra mile on behalf of the sheep. That is why, when Jesus saw the crowds and thought that they resembled a flock of sheep, he had no alternative: he was the shepherd but he was also the pasture.

We are probably also people on whom others depend. If Jesus is the Good Shepherd, we are called to imitate him and to shepherd the people around us – even if it means changing our cherished plans.

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If we wish to follow Christ closely, we cannot choose an easy, quiet life. It will be a demanding life, but full of joy.

Pope Francis

Take time

By Pope Francis

We are busy, we run around, we think that everything depends on us and, in the end, we risk neglecting Jesus and we always make ourselves the centre. This is why he invites his disciples to rest a bit with him on their own. It is not only physical rest, but also rest for the heart. For it is not enough to “unplug” ourselves, we need to truly rest. And how do we do this? To do so, we must return to the heart of things: to stop, to remain in

silence, to pray so as not to go from the frenzy of work to the frenzy of times of relaxation. Jesus did not neglect the needs of the crowd, but each day, before anything else, he would withdraw in prayer, in silence, in intimacy with the Father. His tender invitation – rest a while – should accompany us. Let us beware, brothers and sisters, of efficiency, let us put a halt to the frantic running around dictated by our agendas. Let us learn how to take a break, to turn off the mobile phone, to contemplate nature, to regenerate ourselves in dialogue with God.

Feast of the week

Monday 22 July

St Mary Magdalene

Although Mary Magdalene features in the Gospels, we know little about her. She came from the town of Magdala on the shores of the Sea of Galilee. Archaeologists are excavating a very busy, complex and multicultural town with more than one thriving synagogue and a lucrative fish market. It's therefore possible that some of the Twelve and Mary Magdalene knew each other

before Jesus began his public ministry.

The Gospels don't explain the meaning of the “seven devils” from which Jesus freed the woman who helped to support him during his travels. Mary Magdalene stood beside his mother at the foot of the cross, helped to prepare and bury Jesus' body and was the first witness to the resurrection. After that, there are few concrete details. One of several traditions says that John took Our Lady to Ephesus and made a home for her, with Mary Magdalene as her companion and supporter.

Loving Lord, you made time for us. Help us to make time for you. Amen.

Today:
Jeremiah 23:1-6
Ephesians 2:13-18
Mark 6:30-34

Monday:
Song of Songs 3:1-4 or 2
Corinthians 5:14-17
John 20:1-2, 11-18

Tuesday:
Micah 7:14-15, 18-20
Matthew 12:46-50

Wednesday:
Jeremiah 1:1, 4-10
Matthew 13:1-9

Thursday:
2 Corinthians 4:7-15
Matthew 20:20-28

Friday:
Jeremiah 3:14-17
Matthew 13:18-23

Saturday:
Jeremiah 7:1-11
Matthew 13:24-30

Next Sunday:
2 Kings 4:42-44
Ephesians 4:1-6
John 6:1-15