

THE PASTOR'S POST

TIRED FROM THE JOURNEY

Dear Parish Family:

I shared some time ago about a priest I met some 15 years ago. His name is Fr. Michael Fish. He is a Camadolese Benedictine priest. Before I entered the Seminary, I went on retreat to the Camaldolese Benedictine Monastery in Big Sur, California. It was my first time on a retreat and here I met Fr. Michael. We

only spoke a few times but it had an impact. A few years ago in the midst of a challenging moment, I looked him up and learned more about his retreats and presentations and subscribed to his monthly newsletter, *Hermit Fish*.



The August newsletter came on July 31, the Feast of St. Ignatius. Fr. Michael made reference to a scene from the story of the Samaritan Woman in the Gospel of John which helped with some connections. When I started the Spiritual Exercises in 2011 prior to priesthood ordination, I struggled with the retreat. I just wasn't "feeling it". I started to read the Gospels and journaled with them.

When I came to the story of the Samaritan Woman (I remember where I was sitting when I read it), things opened up. The line was "Jesus, tired from his journey, sat down there at the well" (John 4:6). I imagined myself sitting next to Jesus talking about my tiredness from the journey -even with the retreat. I figured if Jesus can be tired from the journey, I can be tired too! To receive the newsletter on the Feast of St. Ignatius of Loyola, who wrote the Spiritual Exercises, was a good sign for me.

I used to never admit tiredness. It appeared to me to be a sign of weakness. I just have to power through. No time to be tired. I'm not old and so on. I realize those were moments of pride. If I am not able to admit when I'm tired what else am I not admitting or facing too? (Another letter for another day).

Fr. Michael writes not just about physical tiredness but mental and emotional exhaustion. I imagine many of us can relate. We can see what lies ahead or what we think lies ahead, we can look at the world and country we're part of, the realities of Church

and parish, and not to mention our own "stuff". We're tired. It's true.

We're in good company. Jesus was tired from the journey. Elijah, as we read in the first reading at Mass today, was tired from the journey. He asked the Lord just to take him and get it over with. The Lord would not have it though. God sent him an angel to encourage him, to feed him, to even command him to, "Get up and eat". Angels are messengers and their names derive from their message. The name Raphael, the angel in the book of Tobit, means "God heals" linking to the message the angel brings.

I have come to see in my life God is doing the same for me, especially when I'm tired from the journey. They may not have wings or even be human beings, but God is always sending messages. It might be the angel who encourages me to share what I'm feeling, it might be the presence of a beautiful sign of nature, it might be the angel who says by their presence, "Get up...I'm walking with you..." or might be the message to rest a while longer to restore and renew. Many messages...many angels among us!

So what kind of angel, what kind of message do you think you need? Is it one who feeds? One that heals? One that challenges? One that lifts up? Might I suggest that the messages may already be coming. We're just missing them in the same way those gathered around Jesus could not see his presence among them, in the same way Elijah did not get the message right away.

We continue to pray and reflect on the food of angels, the Bread of Life, in these weeks of Ordinary Time! Let us be brave enough to acknowledge the places we are tired and exhausted, the things that are causing us, like Jesus, to sit down and lean against the wall. Jesus was restored by his encounter with the Samaritan Woman and she was restored by the presence of the Divine before her. Let us pray that the Eucharist we long to receive may do the same for you and for me.

Please say a prayer for me. I promise the same.

Featherman