



A Deserted Place

October 21, 2014

He told them, "Come away to a deserted place all by yourselves and rest for a while," because so many people were coming and going that they didn't even have time to eat. (Mark 6:31, International Standard Version)

It's been an interesting week for me, an interestingly full week. Tonight is the first time I have been alone for seven days. Kathy is working so I am home alone. In the last week I have taken part in a diocesan conference followed by an ordination. On top of that there was a CLB anniversary parade, a patronal festival at St. Luke's Home, two confirmations, three sermons, a Cathedral Chapter meeting, numerous private meetings, nightly dinners with friends and visitors from away, and several houseguests. On Sunday I quite literally did not find time to eat. Monday and Tuesday since then have been taken up with diocesan meetings and only now have I had the time to be still. Only tonight have I found a space to be alone.

Our diocesan conference explored matters of personality and ministry with Professor Leslie Francis and reminded me of things I have known for a long time. Things like the differences between introverts and extroverts and our social needs. I am an introvert in a rather extroverted profession and the need for solitude can sometimes be very great. Especially in a busy week with many people coming and going.

We live in a world that doesn't leave us with many empty spaces any more to be alone and rest (even while writing this brief message my cell phone rang). We live in a world where we can quite literally always be working if we want to, thanks to the wonders of modern communications technology.

When you look at Jesus' ministry in the Gospels you realize that he needed time alone even though he found it difficult to find. There were always people coming and going. We also discover that it was in his alone times of prayer and stillness that he seemed to find the energy and direction to engage with others more deeply and more meaningfully. As the verse from Mark makes clear, going to a deserted place to rest can be a very good thing.

Tonight, I find myself in a deserted place and it is restful. Tomorrow I will be with people again. Somewhere in between tonight and tomorrow I know that my Lord and I will talk. But for now it is good to be still, and to rest in God.

Blessings,
+Geoff