

Compassion, Not Resentment

Intro. How often have you heard the *question*, “What did you do today?” How often have you heard the *response*, “Nothing?” Our parents ask us and as their children we give our usual response. It also happens between spouses and between friends. If the question is asked seriously, then the one asking must really listen to the answer. And the one responding must be willing to give a real answer. It can be just something to say, but it can also show interest *in* and concern *for* each other.

I. When the apostles returned after their lesson in Discipleship 101, the Lord *really* wanted to hear how it went. Imagine voices raised in excitement about their successes and lowered in disappointment about their failures. In the quiet of a “deserted place,” the

Lord intended to hear it all, praising them and offering guidance for future missions. When he invited them to come away to that deserted place, I imagine they felt cared for by the Lord. Over a nice meal together, they wanted to talk about what their days were like. But it was not to be. They didn’t go far enough away. The Lord’s response to the people was gentle, probably nicer than some of the disciples’ or ours.

Scripture tells us that the Lord periodically took off, left the disciples and went to the mountains or a quiet place to be alone, pray and gather his energy and refocus on his mission. It is good for us also, but as we know, often hard to do.

Concl. Quiet time doesn't come to us easily. We have to *take it; purposefully set aside* time to listen to one another's experiences, give our full attention to our family and our friends, to the Lord *and* to ourselves. It takes planning, and even then there are interruptions. That is where the Lord showed he is very different from us. Rather than become *angry* at the people for spoiling his plan for his disciples, he heart swelled with compassion; they needed a shepherd. So he took care of them. It would have been easy for the disciples to feel resentment about not getting a break. The Lord taught his disciples another important lesson in leadership: compassion, how to take care of people. Our religious and civil history has seen its share of good and bad leaders. The prophet, Jeremiah, brought God's wrath upon those who were bad leaders. As a result they were

conquered, their culture crushed and they were carried off to exile in Babylon. Throughout his ministry the Lord showed that care of people comes first. As inheritors of the name "disciple," we must do the same. Because we are human, certainly we struggle and fail. With the help of God's grace and good faith community, we will keep responding in caring for each other, not with anger or resentment, but with compassion, like the Sacred Heart of Jesus.