

Resting

When we look at the very first chapter of the Bible, we read that God was mightily busy—creating sun and moon and stars and animals and birds and fish and trees and plants—and, on the sixth day, human beings in his image and likeness. Then, we are told, on the seventh day, God rested from all the work he had done. If you think about it, that is pretty amazing! Here is the God who at a word can create all that exists needing to rest. Perhaps, the writer was trying to convey something very important here. And, just maybe, the highest point of creation is not human beings but the rest time God created after us!

Whatever is the case, it is a fact that many people's lives are very busy and rest is often quite far down people's lists of priorities. We are 'indispensable'— or there is simply too much to do. We feel guilty if we sit and do nothing. And yet, according to Scripture, that is roughly what God did on that seventh day. He may not have sat down—but he rested and did not create that day. Many years later, God made a day of rest part of the Jewish Law.

You may be taking this time before the Blessed Sacrament on a Sunday — or giving yourself a short "sabbatical" — a time of rest and restoration. This is exactly what God wants for you. It is one of the beautiful aspects of a time with the Lord in the Blessed Sacrament. We are not here to rush around—or do anything—we are simply here to rest in his love and presence.

Jesus and Resting

Some of Jesus' more beloved words are those on the inside of this leaflet: Come to me... and I will give you rest.

We have an example of his putting this into practice with friends. He is enjoying a relaxing meal with some of his closest friends, Martha, Mary and Lazarus. Lazarus is at the table with him — so enjoying conversation and stories of what they have been up to over good food and wine. Mary is sitting close by, also taking time out enjoying the Lord's company. Martha, on the other hand, is doing what many of us do — especially when looking after guests. Some people refer to what Jesus says as a rebuke — which is a bit unfair on both him and Martha. What he says is that she is so busy doing things for him that she is not able to enjoy just being with him. We do not get the full conversation, of course. We do not know Martha's response but perhaps Jesus went on to tell her to put the washing up to one side and they would do it together later! As with many of us, Martha had to be given permission to stop — to put the busy-ness to one side, just for a while — and to come to the Lord and find rest for our souls.

Acknowledgements

Time before the Blessed Sacrament is a series of leaflets produced by the Spirituality Committee in preparation for *Adoremus*. It is intended for individual reflection as part of a time of prayer before the Blessed Sacrament or Exposition. It could also be used with small groups.

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Christ in the house of Martha and Mary after Rembrandt? British Museum.

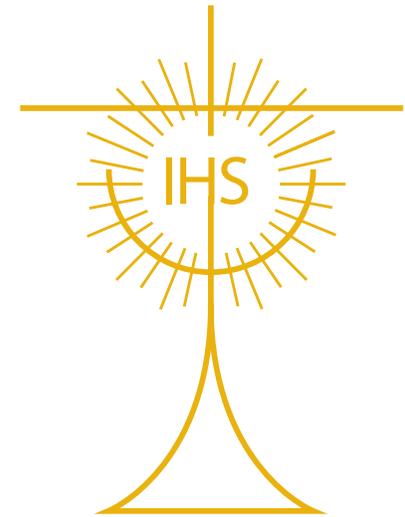
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Time before the Blessed Sacrament

Resting

Be still before the Lord
and wait in patience.

Psalm 36:7



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Looking at Scripture

Jesus said, 'Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest.

Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.'

Matthew 11: 28-30

Jesus entered a certain village, where a woman named Martha welcomed him into her home. She had a sister named Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to what he was saying. But Martha was distracted by her many tasks; so she came to him and asked, 'Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to do all the work by myself? Tell her then to help me.' But the Lord answered her, 'Martha, Martha, you are worried and distracted by many things; there is need of only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part, which will not be taken away from her.'

Luke 10: 38-42



Reflection

How good am I at resting?

Do I really believe that God wants me to rest?

How do I think Jesus and Martha's conversation went on after the part Luke recorded?

How can I make the most of this time of resting with Jesus?

Is there a burden I would really like to share with Jesus today?

Prayer

Lord Jesus,
you valued rest
and loved the company of your friends.

I have come to you as you asked.

I bring my burdens and my busyness
and ask that you help me
to lay them aside for this time
so that I may rest in your presence
and find restoration, refreshment
and renewal.