

V-A-C-A-T-I-O-N

When you have time off, do you do a staycation, or do you go away somewhere? How many are staycation people? How many go away for a vacation? You can have your hands raised for both since many of us do both. I sometimes will stay at home when I have time off but I don't get a whole lot of rest when I do that. It is better for me to take off somewhere, like Ogunquit, where I can sit by the ocean on the beach or walk along the shore. I try not to even get into a car but to take advantage of what is around me for nourishment and entertainment.

Vacations are important, not just because I will enjoy some time off this summer, but because we need to rest. Even Jesus needed some downtime after he had been involved in his ministry. Let's consider what we have read in our Gospel stories for the past few weeks.

- Healed someone in the synagogue on the Sabbath
- Drew the ire of the local Pharisees
- Walked to the shore with the disciples, teaching them along the way in parables, among these was the Parable of the Mustard Seed.

- Got on the boat with the disciples and calmed the storm after they woke him up.
- When they got to the other side of the sea, Jesus and all were met by Jairus who asked to heal his daughter. Word traveled fast in the area and a crowd of people were around him. His energy may have been zapped by the woman who touched him as well as raising Jairus' daughter.
- Jesus gets home and hopes to rest. That doesn't go so well. As he was amazed at their unbelief, imagine what he felt like. The poor man needed a vacation!

This is all in a matter of a day or two, not in the four-week time frame in which we have read the Gospel lessons. Jesus realized that he needed help. So, he sent his disciples off in twos with specific instructions. Included in those instructions was what to do when the messages get rejected. The act of shaking the dust off of one's sandals or shoes allows us to begin again in what we have to do. If someone does not want us to minister to them or rejects what you have to say, it is a way for us to start over again.

We, too, need to re-energize. It is important for us to get enough rest, eat well, get some exercise to the best of our abilities, and come back renewed for whatever tasks are at hand. The sacrament that we will share this morning can help us to renew our spiritual energy. The act of sharing a simple meal with our church community can give us the lift that we need to go back out and do what we can to spread the Gospel message, even in the heat and humidity of July and August.

Please be good to yourselves this summer. I hope you can stay cool, hydrated, nourished, rested, and ready to get on the boat to the other side where we can bring the Reign or Kingdom of God to all in the Greater Westfield/Southwick areas.