

# St. Edward the Confessor

July 2, 2017

13th Sunday in Ordinary Time



## **Thank You**

. . . very much for your support. Last Sunday's collection amounted to \$735.

## **News & Coming Events**

We are still in need of someone to do the bookkeeping. This is a part time job. If you are interested, please speak to Fr. Ernie.

Since there are fewer announcements during the summer, we will not have a bulletin every weekend. Here is a lovely summer reflection:

## **Enjoying Vacation Time**

A recent study demonstrated that it was extremely difficult for participants to "do nothing" for 15 minutes. People felt very uncomfortable feelings of withdrawal from their busy lives. Some reported difficulty resting at all.

It is a common experience in our lives, packed with activity and information, with stimulation and multi-tasking, to slow down and let go of our responsibilities and engagements, even for a break or a restoring rest. We often avoid a break, saying to ourselves that we don't have time. And, even when there is an opening in our schedule, there are many things, which we've put off from doing, that can fill the gap.

## **Recovering our Ability to Relax**

In our hectic world, we are at risk of losing the ability to relax, to experience a tension and worry-free time to let ourselves be refreshed and restored. All kinds of evidence shows how beneficial rest is for our bodies, our psychological wellbeing, and for our spiritual nourishment and growth. It is easy to see the debilitating effects of our unhealthy pace and the compression which many technologies have allowed. The Latin root for the word "pace" is *pax*, that is "peace." Giving ourselves a slower pace can contribute to a greater peace in our whole being.

So, how am I at taking a break? For some of us, it is difficult to find or take the time to consciously unplug and decompress. And, when we do, we too often say, "I didn't know what to do with my time off. I felt restless. I can't just do nothing" Slowing down takes effort and practice.

Sometimes, when we slow down, lots of things rush in to fill the space. We have to slow down at many levels. It involves letting go - even for a while - of a number of concerns, worries, anxieties, tension, conflicts, and problems that need solving.

For some of us, we need to literally unplug our tether to the internet, to e-mail, to texts, and social media, to the stream of connections which are part of our day. Disconnecting - even for a while - can be like fasting, in that it can allow us to become aware of and sensitive to so much more. Peaceful recovery from hard work and many commitments should not be a luxury. We need a break now and then, for the sake of who we are called to be. We are all different and have different needs, but, all of us deserve and need some time to rest and be restored and renewed.

### **Family Vacation or Holiday**

Of course, families need time to take a short or longer break from the day-to-day things we do and take a vacation or holiday to enjoy time together, "away" from our patterns. Getting away together can be a time of tension for a family, because relaxing is difficult for each of us. Each of us may have different priorities and want different things out of a vacation. It is a good thing for a family to take the time to discuss, well in advance of a planned vacation or holiday what this time will mean for us. We may have to compromise and have "some of this" and "some of that," always aware that our choices are about caring for each other rather than "getting my way." Our desire should be that we might travel to a different place - in our relationships with each other - together. It is good to build in some deliberate "rules" for our time. How much technology and stimulation will we bring along? How much will be stay in touch with work and friends, and multi-task along the way? How well can we agree on not fighting or being aggressive with each other - to take a vacation from ordinary patterns which might be unhealthy and explore new patterns of being nice and kind to each other, to foster that sense of peace that this vacation might offer.

### **Choosing to Pray on our Break.**

It is so important on our vacation or holiday time to build in some time to be aware that we are embracing this special time, as a gift from God, and as an opportunity to

enjoy more time with our God, in this more relaxing time - individually or as a family. This can take a variety of forms. The tone can be set in our planning for our break. We can offer a prayer, as we plan, thanking our Lord for this opportunity and asking for the graces we need to enjoy it and to let it be a time of peace and growth. We can ask our Lord to accompany us on this journey and to help us see all of creation around us as gift and to grow in our awareness and gratitude for God's presence with us along the way. We can be attentive to not pack too much into our vacation or to schedule it so tightly that we leave out any quiet time for individual prayer. We can be deliberate in praying together at meal times and to offer a prayer of gratitude, especially when we've had a wonderful experience together. If we are away over a weekend, we can plan ahead to ensure that we can locate a parish or congregation for Mass or worship on Sunday morning - a wonderful opportunity to experience another community experience and to touch base with another part of the Body of Christ.

### **A New Perspective Can Open the Way to Re-prioritizing**

A common mistake after a vacation or holiday is to jump right back into our routine immediately, without taking the time to gather our thoughts and feeling and to take advantage of what we learned from the experience. Getting a new perspective on our life, which a break often offers, is a terrible thing to waste. It is good to ask ourselves what we saw, understood more clearly and what new desires were opened up in our hearts. Did I discover how much I enjoyed the break and felt so much better on many levels? Did I enjoy walking or reading or praying and feel a desire to add those small changes of pace to my life? Did I discover that I am over committed or stretched too thin? Did I even imagine what changes in my life might be possible? Sometime we get so used to the bind we find ourselves in that we can't even imagine backing up a bit and re-assessing our assumptions and choices. Change is really difficult. We usually won't do it unless something we value deeply motivates our change. That's usually love and gratitude to our God and love and gratitude for others. Those deep feeling motivate us to change and make sacrifices for others.

It is a real blessing to ask our Lord what freedom we are being offered in this vacation. Perhaps it is simply to return to our lives, or work, or our relationship with the Lord, with renewed vitality and commitment. At other time, it is important to re-prioritize a number of our choices, based upon what we saw on our break. Even small changes in how we do things can introduce big changes to our attitudes, our practices, our relationships with loved ones and friends and our relationship with Jesus.

May our Lord bless our small breaks, our individual and family vacations, in ways which bless us, give us more peace and perspective for God's greater glory and the service of others.

