1**6TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME**

* We all know the importance of planning in life. Schools, businesses, state organizations, families, parishes, individuals and so on, all create a moment to plan.
* In the Gospel reading, we notice that Jesus has a very clear plan for himself and his disciples. Last Sunday, we heard that the apostles were away on a missionary journey in different towns and villages. The demands of the journey were hectic and exhausting.
* The Gospel reading says that ***the apostles had no time even to eat.*** Jesus had planned to take them to some lonely place where they could be by themselves to rest. Of course, Jesus has always appreciated the importance of rest and recreation. He recognized that *there was more to life than work.*
* No doubt, there is always something to do. The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Yet, Jesus would not allow his disciples to be taken over by work or by other people.
* Although Jesus had a plan for himself and his disciples, this plan was frustrated by the crowds. The Gospel says***, “Now many saw them going, and knew them, and they ran there on foot from all towns, and got there ahead of them.”***
* Jesus’ response here matters a lot. He responded not by getting angry, but by showing compassion to the crowds, for they were like sheep without a shepherd. He began to teach them. Next Sunday, we will hear that he fed them with bread and fish.

**LESSONS**

* The action of Jesus demonstrated that people were more important than plans and that plans were ultimately at the service of people. People’s need of life, shelter and food are of ultimate value.
* We can be upset when our plans don’t come to fruition or work out well, especially when we have put in so much time, resources and energy. However, the Gospel reminds us that failure of our plans can be a blessing in disguise. It could create a space for something meaningful. It can create an unexpected opportunity.
* We believe that God’s purpose is above and beyond our own plans and purpose. His purpose is always inspired by compassion, as we have seen in the Gospel. Jesus showed true leadership.
* According to the **first reading (Jeremiah),** God’s purpose and plan is to gather together his scattered people. According to the **responsorial psalm,** his purpose is to guide us along the right path, to lead us near restful waters. According to the **second reading,** God’s purpose is to break down the barriers that separate us from each other and from God.
* Today’s readings invite us to hold our plans lightly, and to trust that even when our plans fail, God’s purpose for our lives prevails. Whether our plans work out well or not, God remains the good shepherd who guides us along the right path.