



Most Reverend Michael W. Fisher
Bishop of Buffalo

July 13, 2021

Dear Friends - it's good to be back with you and to have a moment to share a bit about my recent activities and offer a few insights into the readings for this coming 16th Sunday in Ordinary Time.

I would ask all to keep our Holy Father, Pope Francis, in your prayers as he recovers from his recent surgery. It's always a cause of greater concern for the Catholic Faithful whenever the Holy Father - our Universal Shepherd - is ill or incapacitated from his daily responsibilities. Appropriately, the readings for this Sunday include the Psalm of the Lord as Shepherd - who leads us to restful waters and guides us along right paths. In much the same way, we look to the Holy Father as pastor of the Universal Church and understandably have the notion that he is somehow immune or protected from the health issues that the rest of us have to deal with. But of course, that's not the case as we've seen over the years. The Lord entrusted His Church to Disciples who were very much human and imperfect. And in doing so, makes clear that it is God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit who guides and sustains the Church - and in whom we must ultimately rely on in our own efforts and work to conspicuously live the Gospel in our daily lives.

The Gospel of Mark for this Sunday makes abundantly clear that the Disciples were worn down by the intense demand of those who gathered to hear the Lord and His teachings. Jesus, recognizing the toll this was taking on His Disciples says: *“Come away by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while.’ People were coming and going in great numbers, and they had no opportunity even to eat.”*

It's good to acknowledge that living and sharing the Gospel can be hard work! It can take a toll on us as it requires us to be oriented toward others and their needs, often at the risk of neglecting our own. But at the same time, we need to take time for ourselves - to get away to a quiet place now and again, to disconnect, and recharge. To pray and reflect and to allow the Lord to replenish us and renew our spirits.

This past Sunday I had the great pleasure to preside over the installation of Fr. Martin Gallagher as the new pastor at Blessed Sacrament parish in Tonawanda. I also had a delightful and very productive meeting with local superiors of our various religious orders, updating them on the *Road to Renewal*, which of course includes them and their contributions to Catholic faith and



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ministry across Western New York. They are very much a gift to our local Church and add an invaluable dimension to our Diocese. And this coming Sunday, I'm very much looking forward to celebrating an outdoor Mass and enjoying a barbecue with the Holy Family parishioners in Niagara Falls. I can't think of a better way to spend a summer day and am grateful for the invitation of this parish family - and all those other parish communities that I've had the delight to pray with and get to know over these past several months.

I hope you're finding time to enjoy the summer months with family and friends - making time to enjoy the simple pleasures that define the lazy days of summer and create cherished memories for the years ahead.

Thanks so much for taking a few moments to connect with me - please be assured of my constant prayers for you as I ask also for yours. I look forward to sharing again with you very soon.

May God's goodness and constant presence be a constant source of comfort and joy for you and all those whom you love!

Sincerely in Christ,

+ Bishop Mike