

Fourteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time
July 10, 2017

Wasn't the Fourth of July just great? We are immersed in the middle of summer and the opportunities to live life to the fullest are given to us in every way. Wisconsin is at its best this time of year and it gives us a chance to enjoy family and friends like never before.

In the midst of this veritable paradise and life of freedom simmers an alarming situation. The death rate from drug overdose is increasing dramatically. We are a push button culture where we expect immediate results. If we have a pain, we take a pill. What or who do you turn to when you are in pain?

The gospel today tells us, "Come to me all you who labor and are burdened and I will give you rest." These very assuring words help us to come to the heart of our problem. Medical science has given us wonderful resources to help us in our physical vulnerabilities. But popping a pill does not get us to the heart of the problem.

Usually, a pill does nothing more than stimulate or depress a natural process in the body. There are always side effects of some sort or another. We end up jerking around our natural body processes to the point that makes us really sick.

I submit to you that every problem has a spiritual answer. Come to me, all you who are burdened, and I will give you rest.

Why do people take drugs? Sometimes they're just curious. Sometimes it's peer pressure, they want to be part of the crowd, sometimes is because their bored or depressed and have nothing else to do. Sometimes they just want more excitement in life. They're just looking for some titillating experience.

Come to me and I will give you what you are looking for.

Some people take drugs because they are in pain. Often times that pain is confused with anxiety. Maybe they just can't get to sleep. Come to me and I will give you rest.

I have to be careful in talking critically about drugs. If it wasn't for my chemotherapy, I wouldn't be here today. I have to say however, that those drugs leave you with a lot of anxiety and physical tension. Sometimes I felt like I had 1000 cups of coffee. Sometimes I felt like I had just climbed Mount Everest.

I am convinced that as sick as I was, (I had only 10% of my bone marrow), that what I needed most was the healing hand of God. Come to me all you who are burdened and I will give you rest.

Who do we turn to first when we are heavily burdened? I know that even if my lymphoma never comes back, there will be something else. What I really need is what the gospel calls me to. Come to me and I will give you rest.

I do believe that even the most addicted addict is powerfully drawn to God. But the thing that is in vogue these days is homemade religion. It is as flimsy as a lemonade stand. Christ gave us the Catholic Church with all its discipline, prayer and scholarship, and for us, 2000 years of perspective. Come to me and I will give you rest doesn't mean just when we feel like it. It means a commitment to the Church and being accountable to it.

It is with this gift of the Church that we hear, 'Come to me...and I will give you rest.'