

Reflection 12<sup>th</sup> July 2020

Next week I am on 'Staycation'. Staycation is the new buzz word for a time of rest and relaxation at home.

Rest and relaxation is something that everyone needs. Many folk have their own activities and coping mechanisms that provide a break from the daily pressures of life and I trust you have yours.

Take the computer game for example. Playing the game is absorbing and transports the player into an imaginary world. In the same way a good book, or an absorbing television programme, or captivating film provides an escape from reality and a much needed breather.

We all need rest and relaxation. We all need to set aside time for refreshment and renewal. The wear and tear and challenges of everyday living inevitably take their toll. You need to take 'time-out', Jesus did.

The gospels tell us that Jesus regularly withdrew from the demands of his mission and ministry to be alone, to pause and pray, reflect and be renewed.

Whether Jesus walked in the wilderness, or water's edge, whether he got into a boat or rested at Bethany, Jesus made it a priority to take time out from the demands and pressures of helping and healing, preaching and teaching.

The silence and solitude, the friendship and fellowship helped Jesus to stay focused and prepare for what lay ahead.

Best-selling spiritual director and author, Henri Nouwen wrote, 'In solitude we discover that our life is not a possession to be defended but a gift to be shared.'

Staycation or vacation, I hope and pray you will benefit from your time-out and be a blessing to others when you return to the fray and share your gift of life.

Prayer 12<sup>th</sup> July 2020

Sovereign Lord, you are the Creator of the ends of the earth, and yet you call us your children. You are greater than we can ever begin to imagine and yet you call us to call you 'our Father'. You do not keep us at arms length remote in your holiness, but you reach out your hands in love, wanting us to relate to you one to one.

Father forgive us when we fail to follow as you guide us preferring to follow our own inclinations. We live at such a hectic pace, our lives so busy preoccupied with problems, pursuits, plans and responsibilities. In the rush and bustle of each day we too often lose sight of you.

Loving Father, acknowledging these failings we ask that you will remind us of the importance of taking time to rest a while, and not to allow all the needs and necessities of life to overwhelm us.

Gentle and gracious God calm our minds where they are troubled, ease our bodies where they are weary and as many people plan vacations or staycations, help us to rest in your love and in the quietness away from our daily routine find time for you.

Lord of all, draw us closer to you each day so that when we return to our daily routine we may be filled with a new perspective, an inner tranquillity so that we may use all our time more effectively in the service of your Kingdom through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen