

Today we are going to explore Resting in the Spirit. This is the fifth session of this block and I think it is important to review what we have learned over the past few weeks.

Maureen took us on an experience of God's loving touch as he washed our feet. Oh how the Father loves us as he calls to each one of us, to let us know that he forgives us for our past and that we should move forward and make choices knowing that we are his beloved. He wants to cleanse us, to forgive us.

Then Lynne gave us an image of a patchwork quilt, that we would see how God has been present in every part of our lives whether we were aware of it at the time or not. She spoke of the importance of obedience and trusting and believing in God and how that leads to prayer where God speaks in the silence of our hearts (our now clean hearts) and where we can speak back to him in the fullness of our own hearts. She quoted from Saint Teresa "The fruit of love is service and the fruit of service is peace" we are all seeking that kind of peace.

Roy taught us about surrendering, and how we should serve out of love and humility and that we must have faith in God in order to surrender to him, completing trusting that he will take care of everything.

Then last week Father Obi talked about the Word of God speaking to our hearts, enabling us to touch God, to have peace, to know that we are not alone and that he cares for us and will stand with us, and that we should not fear. He

challenged us to grow in affection for God to allow him to increase in our hearts.

These talks were meant to lead us into relationship with the Lord. Today we are going to see how God wants us to be attentive to his presence, and is calling us to rest in his presence.

Rest is intimately tied to God's presence. We see this throughout Scripture. During the creation account, God makes all things and then rests together with his creation on the seventh day. With the introduction of sin, in Genesis 3, humanity is cast out of God's presence. However, throughout the Bible there is promise of a return to continual rest when all things are restored through Jesus.

Even Moses experienced rest through the presence of God in the desert as he led the Israelites after they escaped from Egypt. When Moses was worried about the fate of Israel and the effectiveness of his leadership, God comforted him, saying in Exodus 33:14

“My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest”

Amidst Moses' concerns, God proclaims that rest will be provided through his presence. God's presence was a part of every day life for the Israelites. God dwelt with his people—as a cloud and in the tabernacle. When the cloud moved, the people packed up and moved along with the cloud until it settled again.

As we wait for the coming of God amongst us again we believe that God is ever present.

We read in Psalm 139:7-10 Where can I hide from your spirit? From your presence, where can I flee? If I ascend to the heavens, you are there; if I lie down in Sheol, you are there too. ;

and again in 1 Kings 8:27 Can it indeed be that God dwells among men on earth? If the heavens and the highest heavens cannot contain you, how much less this temple which I have built.

It's amazing that God is not only present with us, but through our faith in Jesus, God dwells within us (through the Holy Spirit). He provides rest for us just like he did for Moses and for Israel.

Jesus also promises rest in the Gospel accounts. He promises that the Kingdom of God is a source of rest when he describes it as a mustard tree where birds will nest (Luke 13:18-19).

In Matthew 11:28-30 He says “Come to me all you who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me for I am gentle and humble in heart and you will find rest for your souls For my yoke is easy and my burden is light”

These verses are profound and promise so much. Jesus invites us to take the yoke that is also on his back promising that he will be doing most of the work alongside us. His presence alleviates our burdens and offers rest that is impossible to attain on our own. All that is required is a relationship with Jesus.

God's presence is a source of rest!

**How can we recognize God's presence in our busy lives
We must be present, and we must be attentive to his
presence.**

**It is important to recognize that you are in the presence of
God wherever you are. Look around and see other people
who are made in the image of God. God is there through his
creation, and we are his beloved.**

**We must have confident trust that God is here and loves us
and cares for us, that he is present and active.**

**Psalm 19:1-4 expresses how creation reveals God's glory;
"The heavens declare the glory of God and the sky above
proclaims his handiwork. Day to day pour out speech, and
night to night reveals knowledge. There is no speech nor are
there words whose voice is not heard. Their voice goes out
through all the earth and their words to the end of the
world."**

**We often bear the burden of the work that we do. However,
one of the most amazing things about the gospel is that we
are merely participants in the work that God is already
doing. He is the one reconciling all things to himself. We are
a part of Jesus' yoke, not the opposite. God is the main
character, but he brings us along for the journey. All work is
sacred, so take the time to recognize that you are doing
God's work (no matter what that may be) and that he is with
you as you do it. Recognize that he is the only one who has
the power to transform lives, we are only his hands, his eyes,
and his voice.**

(God's word)

With all of our busy schedules, it can be easy to cast aside reading Scripture. But, God meets us as we read the Bible. Father Obi told us how Gods word teaches us and challenges us. As we learn more about God and his story, we become more aware of where God is in our day to day lives. When we neglect to read the Bible, we become less aware of God and less aware of the relevance of Scripture in our day-to-day life. We need the Bible to know how God Reveals himself to us in everyday life.

(In community)

Jesus promises that he is present when his followers gather. In our parishes, we experience the love and support of Jesus through others. Worship helps us be more aware of God's presence. God delights in our signing and we can recognize him in the midst of it. Someone once told me that our worship rises to the throne room of God, what a beautiful image.

In our fast-paced world, we rarely get to experience stillness and peace, but as we have heard, many scriptures speak to the importance of resting in God's presence.

Our goal is to allow the peace of God to rule in our minds and in our hearts by submitting all we are to Him, and allowing His stillness to refresh our souls.

When you become attentive to his presence and recognize when we are in his presence that is when we must stop and acknowledge him and willingly surrender to his will.

We want to live in the presence of God. We want to worship in the Lords Presence where we can encounter God himself.

The Holy Spirit is free to do many spiritual actions in the person's mind, will, imagination, memory, and emotions when one completely rests and relaxes in His love.

So let us pray

Heavenly Father help us to live in your presence, help us to have an Attentive mind to you, one that recognizes where you are both in sacred spaces but also in the common spaces where you dwell. Help us to be aware that You Father God are particularly present in the blessed sacrament, in the sanctuary, in the word...but that you are also present to us right now right here in the everyday.