



Fr. J. Patrick Foley

Itinerant Papist Preacher

Retreat Ministry • Parish Missions

"Come away by yourselves to a quiet place and rest awhile!..." Mark 6:31
Are you ready to accept the invitation?

Monday of the Seventh Week of Easter

9 May 2016

"You will suffer in the world. But take courage! I have overcome the world"

(John 16:33).

So said Jesus to his disciples. To us. But who is willing to accept that? We are his faithful followers – or at least, we try to be. We pray; we sacrifice. We began this whole Lent-Easter-Pentecost saga with six weeks of genuine penance. Isn't that enough?

When suffering becomes an uninvited and unwelcome guest in our lives, isn't our typical response, *Why me?* As Jesus' followers, we are likely to think that we should not have to suffer, precisely because we are Jesus' followers. Just weeks ago we followed Jesus on his way of the cross; standing on the sidelines, as it were, saddened for Jesus, while perhaps being glad (secretly, of course) that it's not us. After all, didn't Jesus suffer and die so that we won't have to?

No. Jesus suffered and died to show us how to. That's why he says repeatedly to all of us, his followers: "Follow me – *all the way through suffering and dying, into life that is new and changed and risen. Follow me. I'll show you how to do it.*"

And how did he do it? By trusting in the Father, precisely when trust made absolutely no sense: "*Into your hands I commend my spirit.*"

Suffering, in many forms, is part of the human condition. Even more, we who follow Jesus will suffer in the world, because being Christian has never been a way to win a popularity contest. But it is the way to the fullness of life and joy and peace – we stake our lives on that.

We began Lent praying for a new heart. Courage, literally "an act of the heart," is the Spirit's answer to that prayer, so that we can "follow me."

Take courage! I have overcome the world.

Patrick Foley