

# COME WITH ME AND REST A WHILE

By Rev. Donald L. Rose

Taking time off for a festival weekend we may reflect on God's invitation to rest and recreation.

Consider this incident in the life of the disciples of Jesus Christ. They gathered around Jesus and told Him all the things that they had been doing and teaching. They were tired although perhaps not aware of their tiredness. And they were hungry because the intensity of their work left little opportunity for meals.

And what did Jesus say to them at that moment? "Come aside by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while." (Mark 6:31).

In order to find rest they needed a secluded place, for crowds of people continually craved their attention. "There were many coming and going, and they did not even have time to eat. So they departed to a deserted place in the boat by themselves."

In the boat they could have respite from the social pressures and demands on their attention. On the boat they could feel the breezes of Galilee on their faces. They could relax. They were heading for a deserted place, but do not think that it was a desert or sandy region. No, it was a grassy spot, and the grass was green.

Why do we note (in verse 39) that the grass was green? It calls to mind a verse in the most beloved of the Psalms. "He makes me to lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside the still waters. He restores my soul."

God knows that we need times to be restored. Let me quote what Emanuel Swedenborg wrote about recreation and rest.

Among the good "diversions" of a charitable life are "walks and pleasant views of beautiful palaces and homes, of trees, and flowers and gardens, woods and fields, people, birds and flocks . . . shows of different kinds and games. . . There are manual occupations which give the body exercise and divert the mind from the works of its calling. There is reading, too, in books delightful for narration and for opinion, and the perusal of the news in newspapers."

"For in every employment there is an affection which puts the mind upon the stretch and keeps it intent upon its work or pursuit. Unrelaxed, it becomes dull and its desire stale, as salt losing its saltiness no longer stimulates, or as a bow, never unstrung, loses the force of its elasticity. This is true of the mind, kept day after day in the same ideas.

"If the affection of charity is present, any of these diversions will recreate: shows, games, instrumental and vocal music, beauties of field and garden, and social life. Deep in them, the love of being useful remains and is being renewed. The longing for one's work sets a term on the diversions and brings them to an end. The Lord has been flowing into the diversions from heaven and bringing renewal."

The last line of the above quotation makes me think of the Biblical phrase “rest in the Lord” (Psalm 37).

One of the Ten Commandments has to do with taking a sabbath of rest. Let us remember the words in the 11<sup>th</sup> chapter of Matthew: “Come unto Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden. And I will give you rest.”

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