

Wednesday of the 2nd Week of Advent
Memorial of Saint Ambrose
December 7, 2011 8:30am

The Franciscan priest Father Richard Rohr has written a reflection on something that Jesus says in today's gospel.

Father Rohr is a current, well-known theologian and spiritual writer.

His reflection on this passage is challenging but very worthwhile.

He writes this:

"It is safe to say that there is confusion between what is needed for life and what is really important for life.

The vast majority of American stores seem to be selling wants and not needs.

What we now call needs were formerly wants.

The upwardly mobile in our culture cannot feel good about themselves unless the clothes and the house are upgraded, unless the latest gadget is acquired.

This keeps us all quite trapped, unfree, and unsatisfied.

Meanwhile, most of God's people on this earth starve.

Most of God's people have learned to find happiness at a much simpler level.

We have moved to a level where we have made happiness and contentment largely impossible.

We have created a pseudo-happiness based in having instead of being.

We are so overstimulated that the ordinary no longer delights us.

We cannot rest or abide in God, as Jesus invites us [today].

We have become human doings more than human beings, and the verb 'rest,' as Jesus uses it, is largely foreign to us.

Indeed, such rest feels like nothing at all."

Father Rohr's comments are challenging.

I do think they have validity and I recommend two things in response to his insights and Jesus' invitation today:

"Come to me, all you who are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest."

First, live more simply.

Before buying things, think about whether they are needs or wants.

Instead of buying so many wants, think about sharing that money with those in need or even saving the money for future needs.

And before buying so many wants, think about whether spending this money just puts us more deeply in the restless treadmill of consumerism and keeps us from the very rest to which Jesus invites us today.

So, live more simply, and second, pray more reflectively.

Instead of just praying words or saying prayers, pray so as to rest with God.

Make some of our prayer just being with God – being with God.

Allow God, allow Jesus to give us inner rest in that way.

Allow God, allow Jesus to transform us little by little into himself in this way.

This rest will change not just what we do, but who we are.

It will make us more of a human being instead of a human doing.