

16 (B)

A man was caught in a snow blizzard in Alaska. His truck left the road, and he ended up a long way from the main highway. It was getting dark so he decided to await the morning light before taking any action. When he woke up in the morning his truck was completely frozen shut and covered in snow. It took six days before he was spotted and rescued. When he was rescued he was asked what he did during those six long days. He replied with all seriousness. 'I did an awful lot of thinking and praying.'

God forbid we should ever be forced into a precarious situation like that before we consider praying. Quiet time with Our Lord should be part and parcel of our everyday lives. Maybe Jesus had this in mind when he said to the apostles; 'come away to some lonely place all by yourselves and **rest awhile**'. On umpteen occasions Jesus himself beat a hasty retreat into the hills away from the crowd to be alone with God His Father. There are lots of retreats these days for lay people who want to deepen their faith and many people come away spiritually refreshed.

Over the next six weeks or so lots of people will spend **time away** with family or friends. Many will head abroad if regulations allow, but sad to say, most chase the sun and the sand more to **indulge their bodies rather than refresh their souls**. Today's **psalm** says: 'near restful waters he leads me to revive my drooping spirit', not my drooping body. But 'restful waters' seem to refer more to an **inner stillness** rather than an actual place. Having said that we do need to find some quiet place to cultivate this inner stillness. Jesus said: 'when you pray, go to your private room, shut the door and pray to your Father, who is in that secret place'.

Perhaps many people might see this as a **waste of time**. Judging by the ratings, millions of people found time to watch

the match last Sunday evening and wouldn't miss it for the world. Our time with Our Lord should also be a 'not to be missed' diary entry.

A young priest once asked Saint **Theresa of Calcutta** how he might become a better priest. She said: 'spend some quality time each day before our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament' and your priesthood will blossom.

Busyness is often seen by this generation as a looked-up-to quality, but it may be little more than a **smokescreen** for our unwillingness to move beyond the material to the transcendent i.e. the divine. **Pope Benedict** bemoaned the fact that **our age has repressed the sense of God and of the transcendent.** The entire realm of religion, faith and God, the domain of spirituality, is banished from everyday life or marginalised. Our spiritual side has been repressed, the Holy Father said. All kinds of repression do us harm and that includes suppressing our spiritual side.

Unlike Jesus and the apostles, perhaps we cannot go away to some lonely place but God is everywhere and a quiet time spent with Him will reap its rewards.