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## BISHOP RICHARD'S WEEKLY REFLECTION

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Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

This Sunday's Readings speak of two themes: rest and action. Both of these are necessary in the Christian life.

In the First Reading, Ezekiel paints a picture, in divinely inspired words, of the action that God takes to ensure a place of safety for the people of Israel. It is God who plants a cedar tree on the high mountain. The Cedar is regarded as a noble tree. It provides shade and its wood, with its scent, is used for the panelling of the Holy Place. In the shade of this tree – planted by God Himself – all find rest.

St Paul, in his letter to Corinthians, expresses his desire to be at home – at peace and at rest – with the Lord. For us – as for Paul – the whole of our lives as Jesus' followers must be about the fulfilment of all the Lord would do in us. A life lived in conscious response to God's will, the way of the Gospel, is the sure way for us to find life.

Jesus, in the Gospel, brings rest and action together. The sower throws seed on the land. What happens next is beyond him. God is active and the sower, in his work, is cooperating with God's action. It is in the time of 'rest' as it were – when the seed is growing unseen, that God is at work.

These texts remind me of the two sisters of Bethany – Martha and Mary. Martha is always busy. Mary recognises the need to simply be with the Lord, to sit at his feet and rest in his presence. Both are needed. Martha and Mary need to be, as it were, present in us all. The times of shelter and rest with

Christ – the times of prayer, the moments when we are especially conscious of placing ourselves in His presence, reflection on the Scriptures, the Eucharist - are the very times we need for the action that God calls us take – the times when, with St Paul, we are doing all the Lord calls us to do for the building of his Kingdom.

With every Blessing,

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