



Rest & Recreation (Version 1)

Submitted by Pat Ober, Certified Pietra Fitness Instructor, with acknowledgements to Gwendolyn Ober.

PRAYER INTENTIONS, SIGN OF THE CROSS & OPENING PRAYER (Standing or kneeling*) *Glory to you, Lord. "Make my body healthy and agile, my mind sharp and clear, my heart joyful and contented, my soul faithful and loving."¹ Let my heart, therefore be holy, true to you O Lord my God, so that all may know I belong to You². Have mercy on us, and be with us today as we contemplate rest & recreation.*

INTRODUCE TOPIC & SCRIPTURE **Mark 6:31** *"Come away by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while."*

BREATH-WORK *Submitted by Pat Ober, Certified Pietra Fitness Instructor, with acknowledgements to Gwendolyn Ober.*

BODILY PRAYER VERSE **Psalm 23:2-3** **"Near restful waters He leads me, He restores my soul."**

MEDITATION "Our life is one of service to Christ, to our family and to society; it is a life of work and of dedication to souls. And so we shouldn't be surprised if we sometimes feel tired and need a rest. In our free time we need to recuperate our energies if we are to serve better and also avoid injuring our health... St. Gregory Nazianzen comments that...*a cord cannot endure constant tension, and an archer needs to loosen the ends of a bow if he wants to be able to draw it again later on... See how much God loves us, my brethren, says Saint Augustine, because when we rest, it is really He who rests!*"³

We need to rest and there is no shame in "unstringing our own bows". We must carve out leisure time in order to be fruitful in body, mind, heart and soul. But when we are tired we should utilize time to rejuvenate ourselves in a manner that also gives glory to God, whether it be to gain more sleep, go for a prayer walk or run, work in our garden, read an encouraging book or take a fitness class!. Other leisure activities, such as shopping or just plain 'vegging on the couch' are acceptable too, just so long as the activity would make God happy. To paraphrase St. Augustine, it is really God who rests; hence if the activity no longer would please God, it's time to move on to another leisure activity that would do so.

RESOLUTION (Re-read Scripture.) Do we use rest as a form of recuperation, to gain strength, form ideals and make good plans? Do we return from rest to our daily job with renewed energy? Do we observe Holy Days by offering our first duty to God, thereby placing Him at the center of our lives? Let us resolve to take the time for interior enrichment, to grow in the love of God; to try to make life more pleasant for people around us, since *"their contentment and happiness can contribute greatly to our own relaxation"*⁴. Holy Spirit, come...

ENDING PRAYER (Kneeling*) *Lord, we thank you for this opportunity to be able to come together - to work on ourselves and strengthen ourselves, physically as well as spiritually. May all I do, glorify You. Mary, Refuge of rest: **pray for us**; St. Joseph: **pray for us**; St. Gregory Nazianzen & St. Augustine...; **pray for us**. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.*

¹ St. Thomas Aquinas

² Based on 1Kings 8:61 and 43

³ Fr. Francis Fernandez, *In Conversation With God*, Vol. 4, 29.1. Used with permission.

⁴ *Ibid*, Vol 4, 29.1.

*Modifications include raised -knee position or sitting with legs extended. *Cross legged seated position is not to be used during prayer.*

