The Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

July 18th, 2021

Over the Past weeks we have been hearing the Gospel of Mark. These recent readings trace the development of the Disciples and the Anointing of the 12 Apostles by the Holy Spirit. In today's Gospel the Apostles are returning to Jesus, reporting on their adventures of preaching and teaching. In seeing the demanding crowds, Jesus invites the apostles, to come away to a deserted place and rest. Even there the crowd managed to arrive before them awaiting their arrival.   Jesus was moved with pity, for they were like sheep without a shepherd.

Here the First reading from Jeremiah comes in to play: The final blow to the unity of the household of Israel was the destruction of the Temple and the Exile into Babylon.   The people were deceived by the false prophets and priests, who scattered the Israelites like sheep, driving them into Babylon, like Sheep without a shepherd. There they remained in exile for a generation, losing sight of their ancestry as God's children.

> "I will gather the remnant of my flock…
> and bring them back to their meadow;"

Here is where Mark uses the metaphor of the Good Shepherd. God is the compassionate One who gathers his sheep from foreign lands, bringing them back. And "none shall be missing, says the Lord."

So, we too may rest assured and in peace, for even you and I will be brought together into One. "Make them one Father, as you are in me and I in you". Gather us home.