

Overwhelmed - Mark 14:32-42

Read Mark 14:32-42 and Luke 22:39-46

1. Have you experienced a time of being totally overwhelmed or witnessed it in another? If you have, maybe you could share this?

2. Jesus was completely overwhelmed. In vulnerability he shares this with his disciples and asks them to keep watch with him. Jesus often goes away to pray but here he stays close to Peter, James and John, he wants them to witness his suffering. Why?

3. As we know, they didn't stay awake! Why did they sleep when their Lord was only 'a stones throw away' crying out in anguish to his Father?

*Luke tells us in vs 45 - They fell asleep "out of sheer sorrow".

4. Can you remember a time when you have slept in response to sorrow or grief?

Father Ron Rolheiser writes:

Whenever we feel so weak and overcome by disappointment that we give into actions that we know are not good for us... we have fallen asleep out of sorrow.

Whenever the unfairness of life so embitters us that we cannot resist the urge to give back in kind, anger for anger, recrimination for recrimination, pettiness for pettiness, we have fallen asleep out of sorrow.

Whenever the complexity of life so confuses us so that we no longer feel any obligation to take care of anyone beyond ourselves... we have fallen asleep out of sorrow.

Whenever we feel so overwhelmed by the fact that God seems silent, withdrawn, and unwilling to intervene and clean up the world... we have fallen asleep out of sorrow.

Whenever we feel like a minority of one, so alone, little, and despairing before the powers of chaos and darkness that we believe that Christ is no longer Lord of this world, we have fallen asleep out of sorrow.

5. Which such sorrows leave you so exhausted that you fall spiritually asleep?

Peter woke up when he heard the cock crow, and would never fall asleep in that way again. We too have an infinite number of second-chances even if we have, for most of our lives, been asleep out of sorrow.

Spend some time in silence. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal the things that exhaust you so much that you 'sleep out of sorrow'.

Father, thank you for the lesson of Gethsemane. Help us to be awake to our sorrows, to Your suffering, to the fragility of this world. Help us to be awake to all You would teach us, however difficult the lesson. Lead us from sorrow to joy, from the garden to the cross to the empty tomb.