

Fr Ben's Weekly Reflection

28th Sunday Ordinary Time

Oct 11, 2026

I Get It

A typical day at seminary started with a Holy Hour at 6:15am, morning prayer at 7:15, breakfast at 7:45, classes from 8:30 to 11:30, Mass at 11:45, and community lunch at 12:30. After that, you might have an afternoon class, formation meetings, spiritual direction, exercise, or a **nap**, until communal evening prayer at 5pm. Sometimes there would be an evening class electives or trips to your teaching parish for parish events. Whew.

It sounds full (it is), but the biggest complaint we had as seminarians was the Mass time. If a class goes long, you may only have 10 to 5 minutes to get back to the seminary, drop of bags, use the restroom, and get to the chapel. Mass is supposed to be the highlight and center of our day. Yet often, I must confess, I was tired and unfocused. I had been in lectures all morning so the homily went in one ear and out the other. If Mass goes long, that meant rushed lunch.

All this to say: **I get it**!

"Come to the feast" the King says. "Yeah, but…" seminarian me said. "The music is too slow. The seats are hard. I have a full schedule. I'm not focused. I'm being pulled in 50 different ways. I have a test after lunch."

One could look at our seminary schedule and it say, "well, Holy Hour is too early. Sleep is important. Maybe just one communal prayer or none since they will be praying on their own as priests. Finals are coming so maybe we'll skip the retreat so they can study."

A sad reality in the Church is that sometimes priests leave the priesthood. I know two from my time in seminary. It's a generally well known "fact" about these priests isn't the question "why did you stop praying?" The question is always "when did you stop praying?"

I would say the same is true for all of us Catholics. We may be baptized, but as in Sunday's Gospel parable, many of those invited drift away to other options. Some go so far, they attack the King's servants. Can we really call those people "faithful servants" of the King? I'd say no.

So, I get it. Life is full. We are pulled in 50 different ways at minimum. The temptation is always to first skimp on and cut prayer times. The seminary knew this and the schedule was a tight routine that helped build up the habit of prayer in our lives. Prayer was **never** skipped. Prayer always got first priority, even in the midst of the full schedule. Without prayer, we will drift. Mass is **the** prayer that not only helps ground us, but connects us to God and God to us. He is giving us His life to strengthen ours.