

RUNNING ON EMPTY

The other day I was driving down a motorway and realised my petrol tank was low. The warning light was on. I was busy talking to my wife and so made a mental note to stop at the next service station. The discussion was so interesting (how people who are life long church members are fed in their faith) that I actually missed the service station!! For the next 20 miles we were running on empty! It was a bit scary because who wants to run out of petrol on a motorway?

Do you feel you are running your life on empty sometimes? There is not much left in the tank, but somehow you have to keep going. This very problem happened to me a few years ago. The trouble was I was so busy I didn't even notice my internal spiritual tank was completely dry. Providentially, round about the same time I was given a free gift, the wonderful gift of a sabbatical. What a privilege to be released from daily routine. However, if you were given three months leave, what do you do, given there may be financial and family constraints?

After much thought and prayer, I took the decision of going on a retreat. The first day of my retreat found me wandering in the countryside around the retreat centre. I noticed in the distance a large farmhouse that looked very interesting. After quite a long walk, I stood in front of the farm. It was quite an old building but looked very sound and well built, able to withstand all kinds of weather. Then I noticed that the building was completely empty – there was no life in it at all. It was deserted and desolate. The penny dropped. The building was me – empty. I knew in that moment of time why God wanted me on retreat. Even if I didn't know, he knew I needed to spend time with him to fill up my spiritual tank. There is one important point – it was a silent retreat. More next week.

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