

Fifth Week of Easter

PRAYER FOR SLOWING DOWN

Loving God, you made the days and the nights.
Sometimes it seems we never have enough time,
but you have given us all the time we need.

Help us to slow down
so that we may
see the smiles around us,
hear the music of laughter and words,
smell and taste the delicious food you give.

In noticing all these things,
we honor all that you have given us,
if we simply take the time,
which itself is a gift from you.

We ask this through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.



APRIL 20, 2008

THE ATTITUDE OF A SERVANT

In today's reading from Acts (6:1-7), the apostles were concerned because some of the widows were not receiving their food each day. They called the community of disciples together to solve the problem. It was decided that the apostles would spend their time spreading the word of God and seven others would take their places waiting on the tables. How interesting that the seven men were chosen as deacons, not for their cooking or table waiting skills, but because they were deeply spiritual and prudent.

This teaches us about the attitude to bring when we volunteer our own time. If we are helping in a food bank, a soup kitchen, a homeless shelter, or even in our home, we

do it with a Christian attitude. If we are prudent we do not judge those whom we serve. We know that we are to serve as Jesus did when he washed the feet of those who came to the Passover meal. He described himself as a servant. He explained that what we do to those considered the least among us we actually are doing to him. It is Christ to whom we hand the plate of food. It is Christ who will wear the clothes we donate. It is Christ to whom we listen. We go to serve with a spiritual and prudent attitude, as did the chosen disciples. And as we serve, we grow in spiritual insight and prudence. We will receive more than we give.

This Week at Home

MONDAY, APRIL 21 KEEP LEARNING

Today we remember Saint Anselm (1033–1109), born in Italy and educated in France at the Benedictine Abbey of Bec. He later became the Archbishop of Canterbury in England. Anselm had great influence on the politics between the Church and the English monarchy, but he was also a scholar and teacher. He applied reason to the mystery of faith. Anselm's balance of faith and reason is a good model for Catholics today. The gift of faith can be enriched by learning and thinking about God. Look for a class or workshop; study the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*; read Catholic magazines, books, and newspapers; and thank God for Saint Anselm's work.

TUESDAY, APRIL 22 JESUS' PARTING GIFT

In today's Gospel (John 14:27–31a) we read that as Jesus prepared to leave this earth to return to the Father, he left his disciples a gift. He said, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you." This gift from Jesus to his followers is a treasure. Caring for it means helping to bring peace in every situation. Peace is not merely the absence of conflict. When we live peacefully we do not focus on protecting ourselves and defending our opinions. Instead, we try to live the virtues Jesus taught us. *O God, show us how to make our hearts peaceful—not taking offense, not acting out of anger, but looking at each situation with patience, compassion, and trust in your wisdom. We ask this through the Prince of Peace, Jesus Christ, our Lord.*

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 23 A BEDTIME RITUAL

When a child is baptized, the priest, the parents, and the godparents bless him or her with the sign of the cross. Some families continue this ritual at bedtime throughout the child's life, signing his or her forehead with the sign of the cross.



THURSDAY, APRIL 24 ALL GOD'S CHILDREN

Today we remember Saint Fidelis (1577–1622), who was killed during a time of great religious unrest as he preached to Protestant reformers in Switzerland. Today around the world, religious groups are still in conflict with each other. *O God, who created all of us, give us the patience and wisdom to understand each other so that we can live peacefully*

in the world you gave to all of us to share. We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

FRIDAY, APRIL 25 FEAST OF SAINT MARK

Saint Mark the evangelist has given us a treasure in the Gospel account that he wrote. This shortest of the all the Gospels is the one the Church proclaims in Year B of the three-year cycle of the Sunday Lectionary. Mark wrote with great energy and urgency, carefully choosing only a few vivid details to tell the story, moving us quickly to the death and Resurrection of Jesus. Because it is so short, you can read it in one sitting, taking in the entire story of Jesus' life, death, and Resurrection. *O God, you have given us the words of Mark to tell the world's greatest story. Open our minds and hearts to deepen our understanding of his teaching about being a follower of Christ. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

SATURDAY, APRIL 26 WHO ARE YOU?

With your family or friends, talk about the qualities of a disciple of Christ, especially disciples filled with the joy of the Resurrection. How do disciples express and share that joy? Then write each person's name on a paper and fold it. Let each one draw another's name. Take time to think and talk about what special qualities that person has or is working on as a disciple celebrating the Resurrection. End your time together by sharing some special food or treat.