

Father James Martin, a Jesuit author, tells the story that when he was a seminarian, he was working on a collection of essays on “finding God.” He sent off letters to many important religious figures of the day, receiving oftentimes responses indicating that those to whom he wrote were unable to send him anything.

He writes that one of his favorite ‘rejection letters’ was from Mother Teresa of Calcutta. In addition to the letter was a small card, upon which was written:

*The fruit of SILENCE is Prayer*

*The fruit of PRAYER is Faith*

*The fruit of FAITH is Love*

*The fruit of LOVE is Service*

*The fruit of SERVICE is Peace*

Silence - Prayer - Faith - Love - Service - Peace.

All of these are things we strive for ... all of these are things we sometimes covet in our busy day-to-day existence. From time-to-time, we may find opportunities for silence. If we are disciplined, we may have a good, solid, and regular prayer life. Our faith may be strengthened by edifying events, tested by difficult situations, and even questioned by others or ourselves. Among a plethora of emotions, we love ... some people ... most of the time.

Even though the old song may say “All You Need Is Love” ... Mother Teresa’s little note goes further than that.

From love, we reap service ... and from service, we reap peace. Beautiful words, yet in our twenty-first century hustle and bustle - this can be something tantalizingly unobtainable.

In today's readings, we hear of choices to be made - hard choices that need to be made ... regarding love, faith, prayer, and service.

Joshua boldly tells the entire nation of Israel *"As for me and my household, we will serve the LORD."*

In St. Paul's letter to the Ephesians, we hear the often contentious call of Ephesians 5 to subordinate to one-another in relationships out of Divine love.

And in the Gospel, at the end of the Bread of Life discourse, where Jesus has been trying to call the crowds - and us as well - to higher things ... some of the disciples walk away saying *"This saying is hard; who can accept it?"*

Indeed, the life we are called to in Baptism is not an easy walk. Nor are the fundamentals: Silence - Prayer - Faith - Love - Service - Peace ... easy to come by. Yet despite its seeming impossibility, *"with God all things are possible."*

This week, let us find time for silence ... prayer ... fidelity ... love ... service ... and - God willing - peace. And when we find ourselves in the noisy, mundane, unfaithful, hateful, selfish, and hardly peaceful circumstances that can surround us in the world - let us reach out to Jesus ... let us cry out to Jesus Christ ... for *"to whom [else] shall we go? [He is] the [Word] of eternal life. [And] we have come to believe and are convinced that [He is] the Holy One of God."*

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