

When I was in boot camp at Great Lakes Naval Training Center, about an hour north of Chicago, looking back, I would have to say that part of the program was making sure that you were busy all of the time. When the men of Division 202 would hit our racks and the lights went out, you wanted to get to sleep as quickly as possible, since all too soon those same lights would come on again, you'd make your bed, and be lining up with 70-80 other guys to begin another day of back-to-back activity.

The one time during the week that we had one hour to ourselves was Sunday. Most guys used that time to shine their boots. Others would slip under their bunks on the floor for a quick nap – since you couldn't mess up your bed once you'd make it.

But me ... well, I'd head off to the chapel, stand in line for confession, and then go to Mass. Some times I'd sit in the pews with everybody else. Other times, I'd help out in the choir.

Why I went seemed to be a mystery to a lot of people.

In today's first two readings we hear about Abraham. A wealthy man from Ur, a city in what is now known as Iraq. He set off at the young age of 75 with his wife and all of his belongings based on what God had told him.

Imagine that! It's difficult enough for us to get ready to go to the airport for a plane trip, let alone set out across a desert and wilderness with a caravan of everything we own and everyone who is dear to us.

But he did it.

Why he did it seemed to be a mystery to a lot of people.

But the Scriptures tell us what this mystery is ... and that is: FAITH.

Abraham's Faith was "credited to him as an act of righteousness." "By faith ..." he "obeyed," "received," and "offered."

For us, faith is a lot like that. We "obey" in that we are here at church on the weekend. We "receive" grace. And we "offer" our prayers and sacrifices as part of the one sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

But faith is something that deserves more attention than one hour a week.

Considering that "righteousness" implies a balance in relationships, how balanced can a relationship with God be if it's only one hour out of 168 hours each week?

The psalm reminds us that "the Lord remembers his covenant forever." For us as Christians, the Sacraments are the sign of our covenant with God.

Forever is a very, very long time.

So, let me offer a proposal.

In our daily lives as twenty-first century believers, we live almost as slaves to the clock.

Ding! Time to wake up.

Ding! Time to go to work or school.

Ding! Time for lunch.

Ding! Time to go home.

Ding! Time for dinner.

Ding! Time for bed.

Here's what I'd like to propose. Take it as a New Year's Resolution. Or take it as a challenge or an experiment in intentional living.

If you have a digital watch that beeps on the hour, you already have the tool you'll need.

Turn on that beep at the top of the hour. If you don't have a watch, let it be whenever you look at the clock and it's 5 or 10 minutes on either side of the hour.

And when you hear that beep ... whether you're cooking, cleaning, studying, working, driving ... whenever you hear the beep ...

Pray a short little prayer. It can be something like "Jesus I love you." "Thank you God." Maybe you'll want to pray a rote prayer like the "Glory be," or the "Our Father." Or depending on the circumstances, maybe you just want to cry out "HELP!"

No need to keep score. But since "The Lord remembers his covenant forever," take a little time throughout the day to remember our covenant with God.

Give yourself some time to exercise your faith.

And like Abraham and Sarah, your faith will be credited as an act of righteousness.