

## ***Peace is...Enduring the Hardships of Life in the Power of the Holy Spirit***

*Acts 14:22*      ***“They strengthened the spirits of the disciples...., saying,  
‘It is necessary for us to undergo many hardships to enter the kingdom of God.’”***

*Revelation 21:5*      ***“The One who sat on the throne said, ‘Behold, I make all things new.’”***

*John 13:34*      ***Jesus said,...“As I have loved you, so you also should love one another.”***

### **Reflection:**

In the first reading, we see that Paul and Barnabas worked, prayed and fasted together. Because of this, the disciples were strengthened, even though they were experiencing rejection and persecution. They were excited to report what God had done with them, how God had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles through their ministry. Their success in proclaiming the Good News helped them to persevere and endure the hardships they were facing. They had success precisely because they fasted and prayed and followed the direction of the Holy Spirit.

### ***Following their example***

We, too, must discern God’s will through prayer and fasting. We each have a role in bringing the kingdom of God to our world, our community, our parishes, and our families. We all experience hardship. We must work together, encourage each other, pray for one another, and talk to one another about what God has done with us, and how God has answered our prayers and brought us through our hardships.

When we fast, we put off having or doing something we want until later. This helps us to learn self-control, which we truly need. It helps us to learn to wait. It helps us to think about what is really important. When we have denied ourselves something, and put our will aside, we can be open to God’s will. When we empty ourselves, we leave room for God to fill us and work through us.

### ***Growth***

Spiritual growth involves a certain amount of discomfort. It means leaving the security of our comfort zone and trying something different. It may be letting go of our own ideas of how things “should” go, or how “they’ve always been done,” and allowing a new way to happen. We may have to look honestly at ourselves and our motives, and set aside what is not in accord with Jesus’ teachings, in order to make room for another, perhaps even better, way. Jesus replaces the old law with the new law, ‘to love one another as He has loved us.’ When we love, we set the others’ good ahead of our own desires, and we grow.

### **Action:**

- Make the hardships of others bearable by giving your time and service to others.*
- Strengthen the spirit of one another through prayer and fasting; encourage others to persevere in the faith.*
- Step out of your comfort zone and **Get Involved!** Join a parish or cluster commission (Worship & Spirituality; Peace & Social Justice; Education & Formation; Parish Life; Stewardship), or join a group involved in the life of the church, like the St. Vincent de Paul Society, the Rosary Society, or the Knights of Columbus.*
- Volunteer to help with specific tasks that are needed: passing out flyers after 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday Mass; bringing up the gifts during Mass; singing in the choir; working at the NWI Food Bank for a weekday or Saturday a.m....*

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<http://www.sbcatholicparish.org/peace-justice.php>