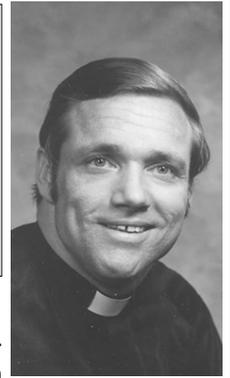




Holy Year of Mercy

December 8, 2015 - November 20, 2016

“Be bearers of the fruits of the Holy Spirit: love, joy, peace, **PATIENCE**, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.” Galatians 5: 22



Perhaps you have heard the saying to “have the **PATIENCE** of a saint,” or “**PATIENCE** is a virtue.” In order to understand these statements, one must first understand the meaning of **PATIENCE**.

PATIENCE is derived from the Latin *pati* which means to suffer, bear or tolerate situations in life without losing one’s serenity or peace. St. Thomas Aquinas stated: “*A person is said to be patient ... because he acts in a praiseworthy manner by enduring things which hurt him here and now and is not unduly saddened by them.*”

Someone who exemplifies this portrait of **PATIENCE** is Father Bill Atkinson. Father Bill grew up in Upper Darby, PA and attended St. Alice School and Monsignor Bonner High School. He was a good student and was known for his athletic ability. After high school, he began studies to become an Augustinian priest. In 1965, as a young seminarian, he was critically injured in a tobogganing accident. Despite being paralyzed from the neck down, he received permission to stay in the Seminary. In 1974, he was the first quadriplegic to be ordained a priest. He was assigned to his beloved Monsignor Bonner High School and for almost thirty years, served the community as a teacher, chaplain and moderator.

Daily life for Father Bill was one of waiting and total dependence. He relied on many medical professionals and volunteers to help him through

his day and attend to his every need. During the night, they turned him every two hours. In the morning, they bathed, dressed, brushed his teeth and helped him to eat. At daily Mass, someone elevated the bread and the wine as he prayed the Eucharistic prayer. Relatives, colleagues and former students described Father Bill as remarkable, inspirational, caring, courageous, kind, forgiving and a man of great **PATIENCE**. He was a true missionary of mercy who carried his cross from a wheelchair as he witnessed to the joy of God’s mercy and love.

Father Bill passed away in 2006. In November, 2015, Archbishop Chaput introduced the cause for Father Bill’s canonization to the bishops of the United States. The bishops unanimously approved this request. Father Bill is now on the road to sainthood!

† **PATIENCE** in Action:

Think of someone in your life who “tries your **PATIENCE!**” Pray to Father Bill.

Ask him to intercede to the Lord for more **PATIENCE**. See how this fruit of the Holy Spirit helps you to be more kind to this person and to others. Pray, too, for Father Bill’s cause for sainthood!

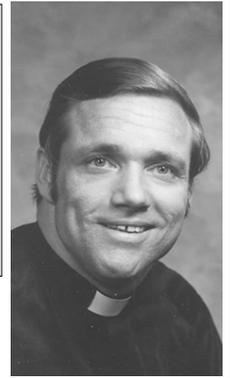
March 6 Fourth Sunday of Lent	Luke 15: 1-3, 11-32	<i>How is the Father of the Lost Son a model of great PATIENCE for you?</i>
March 13 Fifth Sunday of Lent	Psalm 126	<i>How does living the virtue of PATIENCE help you to see the joy of the Lord in your life?</i>
March 20 Palm Sunday	Luke 22: 14– 23:56	<i>The Apostles could not stay awake for even an hour when Jesus suffered in the Garden. How do we sometimes ignore Jesus in our life in our impatience?</i>
March 27 Easter Sunday	Colossians 3:1-4	<i>We are an Easter People! How can we live each day like Father Bill with the patient joy that we have been saved by the Lord?</i>



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BACKGROUND FOR THE RESOURCE

The fruits of the Holy Spirit are based on the letter of St. Paul to the Galatians. Though Paul identifies nine fruits, over time the Church added three more fruits of the Holy Spirit to the list (goodness, modesty, chastity.)

What are the fruits of the Holy Spirit?

We often hear the expression, “Actions speak louder than words.” The fruits of the Holy Spirit are behaviors or attitudes which help us to respond to every day situations and witness to God’s grace working within us. They are signs to others that we are believers and depend on the Holy Spirit to live a faithful Christian life.

March’s resource highlights the fruit of PATIENCE.

The picture on the right hand side of the page is that of Reverend William Edward Atkinson, O.S.A. For more information about “Father Bill,” go to:

<http://www.fatherbillatkinson.com/>

The icon on the left hand side of the page is the official icon for the Holy Year of Mercy. For more information on the Holy Year of Mercy go to: <http://phillyocf.org/>

For bulletin board ideas on PATIENCE, go to:

<http://www.ihmimmaculata.org/docLinks/ABCNotes.html>