

July 25, 2008

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Those of you who read my blog (www.ConcordPastor.blogspot.com) know that I occasionally publish prayers I've written. About a month ago I began writing a series titled, *Monday Morning Offering*, a prayer for beginning the week. On my blog there's the opportunity to comment and this week's prayer garnered some very positive feedback so I thought I'd share it with all of you here (and plug my blog at the same time!) You can find the first three installments in this series online. You'll find this week's prayer below.

Please note! In the registration for our **Vacation Bible School**, we've discovered that a couple registration forms have gone missing. If you registered your children but did not receive a letter from VBS in the past week or so, please call the parish office so that we can be sure to be prepared for your children in August. Thanks for your help with this - and please spread the word to other families you know who have registered.

Sincerely,
Fr. Fleming

Monday Morning Offering

Good morning, good God!

It's Monday, again, and you know - somehow that just doesn't seem fair.
I mean - why can't the weekend be longer?

Come to think of it, a lot of things don't seem fair, Lord:
things not fair in the world - and a lot of things not fair in *my* world...

I'm not saying that my problems are as big as war and world hunger: I understand the difference.

But I have hungers, too... and I need peace, too... and I pray for these things often, and I pray hard...

And to tell you the truth, Lord, I'm not sure you're listening... I'm not sure you hear me...

Sometimes I wonder if you're so busy with international crises and world hunger that you don't have time to hear me and answer my prayers...
(But then again, I'm not sure you're doing that well with war and the third world, either!)

Oops! If I just crossed a line - I'm sorry!
I don't mean to complain about everything, but I'm just saying...

And I know world hunger won't be resolved by a miracle
and that the end of war rests in the hands and hearts and decisions of nations - and folks like me...

And I know they say that "God helps those who help themselves"
but I've tried to help myself with my own problems
and my own problems are, well, *still my problems...*

Am I whining, Lord? Maybe - at least a little... Forgive me for that, too...

I know what I need - at least I know what I *want* - and sometimes I *do* feel sorry for myself and I know that doesn't impress you and some days even *I* realize it gets me nowhere!

When I whine I blind myself to what I *do* have: the blessings that are mine, the gifts I have received...

(And just for the record, I want to remind you here:

I'm not asking to win the lottery or become a movie star!

And I know you know that... but sometimes it helps me to vent like that and I figure, I hope, I pray you can take it...)

But back to what I have been given, what I have received...

Why does it never seem enough? Am I greedy? Do I want too much? Do I ask for too much?

And how come it's YOU who gets to decide what's fair? Even that seems unfair!

Or maybe you agree that things aren't fair in my life

but, for some reason I can't fathom, you let the unfairness be...

Things weren't fair for you either, Jesus: I know that...

and maybe I should ponder that a little more than I do... The Cross...

Maybe I should remember more often

that I pray to a Savior who knows what it's like when things just aren't fair...

Well, I guess I've wandered some distance from making my Monday Morning Offering, Lord...

Can I ask you to forgive my Monday Morning *Rant*? (And I can ask you to *accept* it, too?)

Help me, this Monday morning, Lord, to offer you my thanks

for what I've been given, what I've received, what I have...

Help me remember each day this week the history of your gifts to me over the years...

Help me to concentrate not on what I want and need

but to focus on how you've been generous to me...

And keep me from being jealous of what others have...

I offer you, Lord, my gratitude for all the good gifts that are mine,

for the simplest ones and the greatest ones...

Make me grateful for each good gift, no matter how small or large,

and keep me from counting how many gifts I have and how many gifts I don't have...

You've given me the week ahead, Lord: another week to grow in your love and grace...

Make me grateful for this week

and for whatever you might send my way in the days ahead...

Give me the confidence, strength and grace to share with others what you've given me,

and remind me that in sharing my gifts they are doubled, not halved...

And Lord, show me how to use what I already have to make peace and to feed the hungry
- in my own neighborhood and around the world...

I pray from my heart, Lord, with all its gifts and needs,
and ask you to bless my soul and the souls of all I meet this week.

All good gifts come from your hand, Lord! Thank you for hearing my *Monday Morning Offering*...

Amen.

-Rev. Austin Fleming (On line, the prayer is followed by a YouTube slideshow accompanied by All Good Gifts from the musical Godspell)