



De Sales

SPIRITUALITY SERVICES

"practical paths to holiness"



"Patience...our Daily Bread"

"You need patience to do God's will and receive what he has promised." (Heb 10:36)

"It is difficult in an age where the delay of any gratification is looked on as an evil or at least an unfortunate impediment to the good life. Tremendous cultural forces urge us on to get what we want now and to postpone the consequences until later." (Eugene Kennedy in *A Time for Love*.)

Wise men and women know that patience and suffering are essential characteristics of life itself. It is no wonder that St. Paul put patience first in his description of love's characteristics. Patience is the strength that sustains vitality.

Salesian spirituality stresses this truth in our relationships with God, our neighbor and ourselves. Our journey to holiness requires patience. It is a core issue in surrendering our lives for purpose. A total change of priorities and motivation. It is the readiness to die ourselves to give life to others. It is the living out of

the mystery of life in Christ that is real religion.

Patience is not laziness, indifference nor lack of common sense. True patience accepts, not only the great and heavy trials that occasionally come our way, but also the petty troubles and annoying accidents of every day. This means being patient not only in the face of great sickness, but with minor annoyances that God sends or permits. It means being patient with where God wills us to be, patient with those with whom he has surrounded us, patient with whatever circumstance he permits. The final and most excellent lesson on patience, writes St. Francis de Sales, is "when patience with our neighbor becomes part of our hearts. We are always anxious that others put up with our miseries and that they tolerate us, yet the miseries and faults of our neighbors always seem so great and unsupportable."

We must be patient and little by little eliminate our unacceptable traits and control our

emotions. Life is a continual struggle between hope and fear. God is always ready to help us. Never tire of fighting for your growth toward perfection. Patient people do not whine or look for pity.

Salesian spirituality tells us to be patient with everyone, but above all with ourselves. "Don't be disturbed about your imperfections and always have the courage to pick yourself up after a fall. There is no better way to growing toward perfection in the spiritual life than to always be starting over again and again and never thinking we have done enough."

Practicing patience in our ordinary lives will thrust our energies toward spiritual growth. A parent's simple demonstration of a gentle, patient reprimand has far greater power in correcting a child than rage and passion. Just remember that God demonstrates an incredible amount of patience with us.

In this life, patience should be our daily bread.