

STEPS

Following the Footsteps of Jesus



"BUT DAD, WE'RE AT THE BEACH!"

BY CLARE FIELD

Each summer my family would head down to my Grandparent's house in Ocean City, New Jersey. Dad's parents purchased the St. James' place home in 1973 and it has been a hub for our large clan ever since. My five siblings and I each learned to ride a bike on that street, went on a rollercoaster for the first time at the famous Gilligan's Pier, and at the end of each day would gather on the porch to watch the waves during family happy hour.

Our shore days were pretty routine; wake up, eat breakfast and get ready for the beach. But at least once during those days, my Dad would shake things up. "Ok everyone, before we suit up we're going to pray. Everyone to our room." You can imagine the grumbling that would ensue, "But DAD. We're on vacation!". "But DAD, we're at the beach!" It never helped. We'd pile into mom and dad's room, find a place to sit, and wait to get started.

Sometimes it took a few minutes to start because inevitably a sibling would try to hide or go on a timely bike ride. Eventually, we'd all be gathered. "In the name of the Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit." Sometimes we'd say a decade of the Rosary, each reciting one of the

prayers until it was finished. Or we'd read the Mass readings from the day and share what stood out to us.

My favorite was when Dad would say, "Ok, I want us to go around and tell Jesus one thing you're thankful for, one thing you need help with, and say a prayer for someone else. And then in your heart tell Jesus one thing you're sorry for." There was something about this kind of prayer that felt easy. In my young mind, it wasn't a chore to talk to Jesus like this. And I liked to hear what my siblings said.

When we finish praying, we'd burst out of the room like we'd just been freed from jail. But if you looked at our hearts in the moments before this exodus, you'd see the true effects of this time my Dad set aside. Peace. There was a sacredness that was not lost on our hearts, even in the grumbling.

When I think back on this time I see two things. First, a father who kept our family focused on the Lord, even making us spend time with Him on vacation. and Second, the beginning of a personal relationship with Jesus. I learned to talk to Him during those family prayer times. And that is something I will always be grateful for, even if it did cost me time on the beach!

At the end of July my family - 10 adults, two dogs, and one baby - will descend on Ocean City for a week together. This will most likely be our final summer at the house on St. James Place, and as we make our last memories there I hope we take the time to pray together.

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THE FAMILY THAT PRAYS TOGETHER STAYS TOGETHER, AND IF THEY STAY TOGETHER THEY WILL LOVE ONE ANOTHER AS GOD HAS LOVED EACH ONE OF THEM. AND WORKS OF LOVE ARE ALWAYS WORKS OF PEACE.

| SAINT MOTHER TERESA |

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TIME WELL SPENT

Maybe you'd like to try praying with your family on vacation this summer, but aren't sure where to start. Well, we have some ideas for you! Like Clare's story above, there might be some complaining, but remember, time in prayer is always time well spent!

PRAY IN THE CAR

- Say a quick prayer together for safety as you start your trip, like this one: O Lady of the Highway, be with us on our journey, for all your ways are beautiful and all your paths are peace.
- Have everyone in the car state and intention. Offer an Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory Be when everyone is done for all the intentions.

TALK TO JESUS

- Go around and have everyone talk to Jesus, telling Him one thing they're thankful for, one thing they need help with and one prayer for someone else. Then after everyone has gone, take a moment of quiet in your heart to tell Him one thing you are sorry for.
- Encourage all to talk directly to Jesus, "Dear Jesus, I'm thankful for... I pray for... etc."

SAINT OF THE DAY

- Read about the saint of the day. There is a great app called Laudate. It has information and pictures of each saint being celebrated that day
- Some days might have more than one saint. Have each person pick a saint, read about them for 5 minutes and then share their two favorite facts and offer a prayer to that saint.

Laudate App

