

## *Ask Fr James*

### **How do I know I am living a truly spiritual Life?**

All through human history, people have always wanted to live a truly spiritual and holy lives and they sought to be very close to God. The Bible tells the stories of Adam and Eve, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, King David, King Solomon, the Apostles, Peter, James John and the early Christians and saints. They all tried to be very close to God.

And still today, very many Christians try to be very close to God and live spiritually holy lives but there are some Christians who are extremely frustrated with themselves wondering if they are really living the spiritual life of a disciple like Jesus Christ really wanted. While it must be said that piety is not holiness, I like to respond that we are all called to live holy lives through our spirituality (Vatican II, Lumen Gentium #40). Spirituality is "the human response to God's gracious call to a relationship with himself."

The way to measure our spiritual health is to evaluate oneself on the scale of seven (7) marks of a disciple.

1. Daily Prayer: Do I say my prayers daily?
2. Regular worship - Mass and Adoration - How often do I attend Mass?
3. Bible Reading: When was the last time I opened my Bible
4. Service (charitable acts or Apostolate in and outside church): What do I commit to as service project?
5. Spiritual friendship: Who and where do I hang out/with?
6. Stewardship - giving time, talents and resources: How much do I give to God?
7. Passing on the faith in our family: Am I passing on the faith to my family members?

The above seven yardsticks are a description of the absolute minimum actions required of Catholics regarding the Church and their faith but out of love for Christ and a desire to advance in the spiritual life, one will normally try to do far more than required Christian spirituality, without a measuring yardstick can be deadly—to oneself, and to our relationship with God, and the people around us.

These marks of a disciple have nothing to do with a legalistic, law-oriented approach to Christian faith. The purpose is not to create super Christians or any kind of spiritual elite. No one earns salvation or gains any special favour from God by practicing the marks. They are simply habits of the soul that open us to the wonder and mystery of God's active presence in our lives. They keep us focused; they fix our attention on the things of God.