

Theme: **PRAY TO GOD THE FATHER**

17th Sunday in Ordinary Time!

27 July 2025

The story is told of a mother whose only child, a son, was seriously sick and confined in a hospital. She cared for him as best she could. When some relatives or friends dropped by, she asked them to attend to her son while she went to the chapel to pray. On her knees and in tears before the Blessed Sacrament, she began by acknowledging God as the Source of life and thanked him for the gift of her son who has brought joy to her life. Then she beseeched God to spare him. The worse his condition became, the harder she prayed. But her prayers notwithstanding, her son died. Her relatives and friends were worried about how she would take this unhappy turn of events. Where they surprised to see her take her son's death in peace!

When asked how come, she answered, ***“What I prayed for was what I wanted. But during my prayer, there was something in me that said, ‘Let go, let God.’ Thus, at one point, I finally said, ‘Your will be done, Lord.’ With my child’s death, it was obvious that God did not go along with what I wanted. Though it was painful, I accepted his will wholeheartedly. He knew best.”***

In the Gospel reading (Lk 11:1-13), the disciples, impressed after seeing Jesus pray, asked him, **“LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY.”** Jesus first taught them the Lord's prayer, then gave a short discourse on prayer. We often say that prayer brings us nowhere. A reflection on this gospel account, combined with the mother's story, may help us discover why.

WHEN WHE PRAY. Jews prayed at the 3rd, 6th and 9th hours. On the other hand, Jesus teaches us that any moment is just fine. In the gospel reading, he tells of someone asking for help in the middle of the night. God is always **“ON CALL.”**

HOW TO BEGIN. The Lord's prayer begins with the proper address of **“Father,”** followed with an expression of praise, **“Holy be your name.”** it is thoughtless of us to begin prayer with our **“give Me's”** without first showing reverence and praise to God whom we are addressing. This is what the mother did in our story – she first praised and thanked God for the gift of her son before praying for his healing.

DISPOSITION OF THE PERSON PRAYING. Jesus gives the example of someone who went to a friend's house at midnight asking that he be lent some bread. When we pray, we go to God not only as to a Friend but as to a Father. A human friend may not always respond to our needs. Not so God the Father. In fact, we do not have to convince him for he is already on our side since he loves us as his children. He is Abba, Dad, Father. Thus, in prayer we should let God be God, that is, be our Father.

WHAT TO PRAY FOR. During his discourse, Jesus asked his disciples, ***“What father among you would hand his son a snake when he asks for a fish... or a***

scorpion when he ask for an egg? Jesus is telling us that if a human father does not seek his son's harm not destruction, neither does the Father. And his concern is about life-giving gifts – "Give us each day our daily bread and forgive us our sins – ot about things ephemeral.

There are things we pray for and do not get. There are things we do not pray for, but which God is most willing to give. We pray for material gifts, whereas God wants us to give life. We pray for things outside ourselves which we think can make us happy for some moments, but he is thinking of happiness from within which it lasts. We pray for success that will allow us to lord it over others, but he thinks of a purifying experience that will make us humbly say to him, forgive us our sins" so that we, too, maw "forgive those who sin against us" thus effecting reconciliation with him and others.

PRAYER IS A CONVERSATION WITH GOD. A conversation is not a monologue but a two-way traffic. So, after we have said our piece to God – joys and blessings received, anxieties and problems experienced and the grace to overcome them – we are to give God a chance to say his piece to us, too.

IN PRAYER IT IS NOT GOD WHO SHOULD CHANGE BUT WE. God is not made in our image and likeness; we are to his. He should therefore be the one to shape us. This is what happened to the mother in our story. With her son's death, she immediately realized that her prayer was not answered. But she learned to totally subordinate or surrender her will to God's. for that, God gifted her with peace amidst the pain of her loss.

PERSEVERANCE IN PRAYER. In prayers of petition, perseverance is most important. He tells us to continue knocking even when the door is bolted. Perhaps it is our heart's door that needs to be opened since the problem may lie in us, i.e., our lack of faith. For with faith, we will discover that it is not really we but God who knocks at our door and he is just waiting to be let in so that he may fill us with himself.

The disciples asked Jesus, "Lord, teach us to pray." He did. Let us pray as he taught them. Then God – Abbam Dad, Father – will not only hear but also answer our prayer. Then our prayer will bring us somewhere.