

The Pope's message at his General Audience of 13 May 2020 as he continues with his series of catechesis on the theme of prayer.

A passage from [Psalm 63](#) was read prior to the Pope's address:

"O God, you are my God –
At dawn I seek You.
For You my soul is thirsting,
For You my flesh is pining
Like a dry weary land without water.
I have come before You in the sanctuary
To behold Your strength and Your glory.
Your loving mercy is better than life.
My lips will speak Your praise.
I will bless You all my life.
In Your name I will lift up my hands.
My soul clings fast to You,
Your right hand upholds me."

The Pope's address:

"Dear Brothers and Sisters, Good Morning!

Today, we take the second step on the course of the Catechesis on Prayer begun last week. Prayer belongs to everyone, to men and women of every religion, and probably, even to those people who do

not profess any religion. Prayer is born within the secrecy of our beings, in that interior place that spiritual writers often call the “heart”.

To pray therefore is not something marginal in us. It is not some second place or insignificant faculty. It is rather the most intimate mystery of our beings, and it's this mystery that prays. Our emotions pray. But it cannot be said that prayer is solely about feelings. The intelligence prays. But prayer is not solely an intellectual act. The body prays. But (we) can speak with God even in the most serious disability. It is therefore every part of the human person who prays if his or her heart prays. Prayer is an impetus, it is an invocation that goes beyond ourselves. It is something that is born within the intimacy of our being, and reaches beyond, because it senses a nostalgia for an encounter, and we need to emphasise this. The sense of a nostalgia for an encounter is more than a need, it's more than a necessity. It's a nostalgia for an encounter.

Prayer is the voice of an “I” that gropes, that tentatively fumbles, in search of a “You”. This encounter between the “I” and the “You” cannot be done with a calculator. It's a human encounter, and it precedes fumbling and groping - the “You” that my being is searching. A prayer of a Christian is born instead from a revelation: that “You” has not remained shrouded in mystery but has entered into relationship with us.

Christianity is the religion that continually celebrates the manifestation of God - that is His epiphany – the first liturgical feasts of the year are the celebrations of this God who does not remain hidden, but who offers His friendship to men and women. God reveals His glory in the prophecy of Bethlehem, in the contemplation of the Maggi, in the baptism in the Jordan, in the wonder of the wedding at Cana. In [John's Gospel, the great Hymn, the Prologue, concludes with the synthesis affirmation](#). No one has ever seen God. The only Son, God, who is at the Father's side, has revealed Him. The

prayer of the Christian enters into relation with a God whose face is most tender, who does not want to instil any fear in men and women. This is the first characteristic of Christian prayer. If men and women have always been accustomed to drawn near to God, a bit intimidated, a bit frightened by the awe inspiring and tremendous mystery. If they had been accustomed to venerate Him with a servile attitude, similar to that of a subject who does not want to be lacking in respect to his Lord, the Christian turns to Him daring to confidently call on Him with the name of "Father".

Christianity has banished from the connection with God any type of feudal relationship. In the patrimony of our faith, expressions such as subjection, slavery or vassalage are not present, but words such as covenant, friendship, promise, communion are. During the long farewell discourse to the disciples, Jesus says, "I no longer call you slaves, because a slave does not know what his master is doing. I have called you friends because I have told you everything I have heard from my Father. It was not you who chose me, but I who chose you, and appointed you to go and bear fruit that will remain, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, He will give you."

God is the friend, the ally, the bridegroom. One can establish a relationship built on confidence in Him in prayer. This is so true that in the "Our Father", Jesus teaches us to present a series of requests to Him. We can ask God for anything, anything. Explain everything. Tell Him everything. It does not matter if we feel lacking in our relationship with God, that we're not great friends, that we are not grateful children, that we are not faithful spouses. He continues loving us. This is what Jesus demonstrates definitively on the Last Supper when He says, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood which will be shed for you." In that gesture, in the Upper Room, Jesus anticipates the mystery of the Cross. God is the faithful ally. If men and women cease to love, He instead continues to love, even if love leads Him to Calvary.

God is always near to the door of our hearts. He waits. He waits for us to open, and at times, He knocks on the heart. But He is not invasive. He waits. God is patient with us. It's the patience of a Daddy, of one who loves us incredibly. Even I would say, the patience of a Mother and a Father, a Mummy and a Daddy altogether, always near to our hearts. And when He knocks, He does so with tenderness and a lot of love. Let us all try to pray thus, entering into the mystery of the covenant. Let us place ourselves in prayer between the merciful arms of God to feel embraced by that mystery of happiness, which is the Trinitarian life - to feel as those who are invited who have not merited such an honour, and let us repeat to God in the hour of prayer: is it possible that You know love alone? He doesn't know hate. He is hated, but He doesn't know hate. He knows only love. This is the God to whom we pray. This is the glowing nucleus of every Christian prayer. God is Love. He is our Father, who waits for us and who accompanies us.

[\(Catechism Ref. 2562 and 2563\)](#)

Summary:

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

In our continuing catechesis on prayer, we now consider its essential characteristics. Prayer involves our entire being, yearning for some other beyond ourselves. Specifically, Christian prayer is born from the realisation that the other we are seeking has been revealed in the tender face of Jesus, who teaches us to call God "Father", and wants personally to enter into relationship with us. In His farewell discourse at the Last Supper, Jesus no longer calls His disciples servants but friends. When we commune with God in prayer, we need not be fearful, for He is a friend, a trusted ally. Whatever our

situation or however poorly we may think of ourselves, God is always faithful and willing to embrace us in mercy. We see this unconditional love on Calvary, for the Lord never stops loving even to the end. Let us seek to pray by entering into this mystery of God's unending covenant with us. This is the burning heart of every Christian prayer, entrusting ourselves to the loving and merciful arms of our Heavenly Father.