

March 23, 2020  
Monday of the Fourth Week of Lent

**Activity for today:**

- Read Fr. Brian's Gospel Reflection
- Complete the Activity for the Day (see instruction below)
- Pray Task for Today (see instruction below)
- If you have any comments on what you would like to see on our website, please comment at the bottom of this page.

***JOHN 4:43-54***  
***Healing of Royal Officer's Son***

**GOSPEL REFLECTION from Fr. Brian Johnson**

In today's gospel at mass, we hear about a Royal Official who is looking for Jesus. When he learns where Jesus is, he goes to Him. The purpose of his visit is to ask Jesus to heal his son. In our faith, we refer to this type of prayer for the needs of others as 'intercession'. We intercede on their behalf and ask God's grace-blessing upon them. In every mass, and in every offering of Morning and Evening Prayer in the Liturgy of the Hours, a portion of the prayer time is dedicated to 'General Intercessions'. These are universal prayers for various common needs in the Church and in the world. Intercessory prayer is so important not so much just for the 'effectiveness' in the prayers being answered, like problems solved. It is much more about aligning our wills and the wills of others all united to the glorious 'Will of the Father'. Our good is strengthened in the offering of prayer for others because it involves us in others' needs. Real solidarity/communion is created with others through our concern for them and in the expression of our prayer for them. Yes, absolutely God hears and answers prayer always in accordance with His will, but it is so good for us to offer such prayer to better sensitize our hearts to the concerns of others. It deepens our understanding and cultivates greater compassion in us for other people. Often the more prayer we offer for others, the less anxious and stressed we become about our own needs. Maybe prayer for our neighbor works just like service for our neighbor, in that if we want to let go of our stresses and anxieties all we have to do is step out of ourselves and help meet another person's needs. So, intercessory prayer can draw us out of any preoccupation with our own wants and needs. By our faithful prayer and any change God may conduct in us, both our neighbor and the world around them is changed, too. God's good is always up to more than we can imagine or entertain.

But, as always for me, if Jesus sets the tone, I try to get in tune with him. I mean 'Follow Him' (like if it is good for Jesus and He did it, then I need to get with it, too!). Jesus set aside time in general to pray, like going off alone or on retreat to commune with the Father (refer to Luke 6:12, 9:18, 9:28, 11:1, 22:39ff), yet He also specifically mentioned 'intercessory prayer' when he taught in Matthew 7:7 'Ask and it will be given you'. Or consider his great teaching of the 'Our Father' in Matthew 6:6-14. With this great prayer of worship and surrender to the Father's Will, Jesus has us use the words, 'Our Father' (v.6), 'Give us bread' (v.11) 'forgive us' (v12) and 'deliver us' (v13). The words 'Our' and 'Us' jump out at me. We are offering prayer in solidarity

with others and with their needs fully in mind above our own. Jesus also specifically mentioned examples of his own intercessory prayer when He said “I pray for them” in John 17:9 He showed it in Luke 22: 31-32, too, when telling Peter, “Simon, Simon, Satan has demanded to sift all of you like wheat, but I have prayed that your own faith may not fail; and once you have turned back, you must strengthen your brothers.” As fellow members of Christ’s body, we do strengthen one another by our prayer for each other. So, let us keep faith by keeping prayer for one another. A great summary to this long reflection (sorry!) is given briefly by the apostle Paul in Philippians 4:6 where he simply says, “in everything, by prayer & petition, with thanksgiving, make your requests known to God.”

**Prayer for the Day:**  
**Prayer for Guidance All Through this Day**

Heavenly Father, Lead and guide me today in all I say and do. May I be sensitive to Your gentle guidance and aware of how best to serve those around me. Teach me what they need from you and use me to serve their needs for you. Keep me focused on your glory. Help me to be willing to go along the path of Your choosing, knowing that it may conflict with my own wishes. Develop in me a heart that delights to do Your will so that the longings of my heart are brought into line with Your plans and purposes and Your will for me and others. Your Son Jesus, is my Way, Truth and Life so keep me in communion with Him, for I pray in His Name, Amen.

**Activity for the Day:**  
**Seek Jesus in the Gospel of John**

Thumb through the whole gospel to find the Seven Signs (miracles) of Jesus that John highlights

John 4:54 says “this was the second sign Jesus did when he came to Galilee from Judea”

**Find and Name the other Six Signs.**

**Send in your answers in the "message" section in the comments box. We will let you know how many people found them all!**

**Prayer Task for Today:**

**Pray-Intercede for  
at least Seven People**