

17th Ordinary Sunday
July 24, 2022
“Learning About Prayer”

Gen 18:20-32
Col 2:12-14
Lk 11:1-13

My Brothers and Sisters in the Lord –

One of the important things that parents must learn regarding their children is when, and when not, to grant their many requests. This is also true for anyone who serves as a teacher or mentor for those in their charge.

Giving children or young people everything they want can be disastrous. However, not granting a reasonable request might not be in their best interest.

Children must learn discipline and self-control when their parents are shopping at the supermarket. Teenagers must realize that special privileges come with responsibilities and certain limits. Even adults must learn respect, deference, and honesty when they ask for something from a superior.

The scriptures for this Sunday teach us much about how we must approach God with our requests.

We know, from the Book of Genesis, that Abraham was on familiar terms with God. God had a mission for Abraham – as He has for each of us. And Abraham was always attentive to God in everything he did. Thus, he recognized God in one of the three visitors – He showed them all Semitic hospitality – And today, Abraham pleads with God for mercy on behalf of the innocent people in Sodom and Gomorrah.

Abraham was concerned because his nephew, Lot, lived there with his family. Unfortunately, there were no other innocents in Sodom. But God’s angels did rescue Lot and his family before the destruction began.

In the Gospel of Luke, Jesus has much to say about prayer. When asked to teach them to pray, Jesus gives his disciples what has become known as his prayer, The Lord’s Prayer.

Luke's version of this prayer is somewhat different than Matthew's – which is the one that we all know by heart. In it we acknowledge that God is our loving Father – who created us and cares for us. We praise, honor, and reverence His name. We pray that His reign and rule continue to grow throughout the universe. We ask that whatever we truly need be provided by His providence – And we ask to be forgiven for our many transgressions and sins. However, we also admit that we must, likewise, forgive everything that others have done to us. Lastly, we ask not to be tempted beyond our strength – not to be overcome by Satan in our last moments!

Then Jesus continues to teach us how persistent we must be in our prayer. It is not that we need to wear God down like a child with a parent – Our persistence reveals just how much we absolutely rely on God – for everything. Persistence also helps us keep our hope alive when we must wait for God's response – according to His time and will. But our prayers will always be answered, in some way, if they come from a heart that is always open to God's ways and His will.

Our prayer can also take many forms. We can ask – and then receive. We can seek what is God's will and discover what it is for us. We can “knock” or “strive” for what seems closed – or impossible – and have whole new vistas opened to us!

Finally, because we have a loving Father, we will always be given what will benefit and help us. “Snakes” or “scorpions” are the devil's work when we turn to resources other than God Himself.

And so, Brothers and Sisters, let us learn persistence and trust from Abraham –
May we learn to pray with the openness and acceptance of Jesus for our mutual Father's will –
May we accept God's answers whenever and however they come –
And when His angels finally come to deliver us –
may we hasten with them into salvation and eternal life!

Amen.

July 24, 2022

Msgr. Russell G. Terra