

## **LORD, TEACH ME TO PRAY**

In today's Gospel (Lk 11:1-13), Jesus teaches us to persist with our petitions to the Father. The man persistently knocking on the door mirrors Jesus' persistently knocking on the doors of our hearts, in order for us, to open our lives to Him. In the 'Our Father' prayer, the first half acknowledges God, as our Father in heaven, whose name we promise to keep holy, and commit to aligning our freewill with His divine will. The second part acknowledges Jesus as our 'daily bread'. When we ask God to give us our 'daily bread,' we are asking Him to give us Jesus, *the living bread come down from heaven*, to share our lives every day. With the daily bread comes an increase in faith, grace, holiness and the necessary courage to carry our Crosses. None of us can avoid the daily bread of suffering, because, when offered up to God, as a redemptive suffering, it becomes a divine currency that will purchase us a place in heaven. However, God expects us to pray, not just for our own salvation, but for the salvation of others, as is our duty and obligation. We get God's attention, when we put our neighbours first, as we see in today's readings. The third part of the Lord's Prayer is asking the Holy Spirit to deliver us away from temptation and from evil.

### **PRIORITISE OUR INTENTIONS**

In today's first reading (Gen 18:20-32), Abraham was persistent with God, asking Him to save souls. This got God's attention. God would have happily saved the people of Sodom and Gomorrah, if they too, turned to God, and repented for their sinful lifestyles. But, they didn't want to be saved. Abraham, the father of faith, was praying to save them, before himself. God used the people of Sodom and Gomorrah, as an example to show us, that if we stubbornly live in sin, refusing to repent, and rejecting Him on earth, then, He takes that, as our rejecting to live with Him in heaven. Our persistent prayers for the conversion of others, can actually work, where the sinner has an illumination of conscience, becoming aware of sin and converts to the will of the Father.

### **OUR FATHER IS A FAMILY COMMUNAL PRAYER**

The man in the Gospel, who was knocking on the door of a friend, was looking for bread to feed others, and not himself. Through persistence, Jesus said that the door would be opened. Persistent prayers for the right intentions will eventually be answered by God. In praying the 'Our Father', we can often forget that it is a prayer of petition. Jesus teaches us how to prioritise our intentions. Firstly, to promise to keep His name sacred, by surrendering to His will on earth, as it is in heaven. We insult Him when we want His help, but refuse to help or obey Him. He thirsts for the salvation of souls. We can quench His spiritual thirst by praying for the salvation of the world. The Church is the visible coming of His Kingdom here on earth. We should always ask God to increase our faith daily. This Lord's Prayer is deeply communal, as seen in the repeated use of "our" rather than "my". It reminds us that we do not stand alone before God, because we are part of a family of faith, called the Church. We are to be united as His children, in our dependence on His daily presence, daily grace and daily trust (daily bread).

### **THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS ESTABLISHED ON EARTH IN OUR BAPTISM**

Jesus persistently knocks on the door of our hearts. If we refuse to let Him in, and reign our lives, then, we are refusing the *coming of His Kingdom*, which we ask for when praying the 'Our Father'. The first door into heaven is the Church on earth, born out of the opened door of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. To receive His love and to receive His mercy in the sacrament of confession, brings us to a *new way of life with Him* (Col 2:12-14). In acknowledging God as our Father (Abba), we are acknowledging that our true home is in heaven. God awaits the arrival of the faithful into the Kingdom of heaven, while Satan awaits the arrival of the unfaithful into hell. We must never cease praying for the conversion of the unfaithful and the unbelievers, but also, our own ongoing conversion. We must not forget what Jesus is teaching us, that true prayer begins with an act of surrender, aligning our freewill with God's divine will, rather than simply presenting our own requests. Spiritual intentions are paramount. We also make a petition to God, asking Him to forgive our offences (sins) against Him, in the exact same way, as we forgive those who offend us. If we cannot forgive our enemy, then God will not forgive us on the Day of Judgement. Let's begin to pray with our hearts and not just with our lips, and allow the Holy Spirit deliver us from all evil. Blessings to all Grandparents today - living and deceased. God bless, Fr. Brendan