

Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time 2019

My beloved brothers and sisters, when Jesus taught the disciples, the “Our Father,” He was not so much teaching them a prayer, as He was teaching them the form for all prayer. He is teaching us what prayer is all about!

The Our Father in Luke’s gospel, is an abridged version of the Our Father we find in St. Matthew’s gospel, that is used at every mass every day throughout the year; however, every phrase of the prayer, is a school of wisdom and a model for our relating to God. Often, we pray this prayer without thinking much about what we are saying.

Jesus is teaching us that the beginning point of all prayer is that God is our Father, and this is how we are to relate to God in all things! He goes on to teach us about the attitudes that we should bring to all our prayer:

The second attitude is persistence. We do not have to nag God, but we are called to be persistent in prayer. God knows what we truly need, and the greatest need that we have as human beings is to restore the broken trust between ourselves and God. Thus, we are called by God in our persistent prayer to get in sync with God’s will in our lives. God is asking us to trust His Divine Providence for us in the unfolding of our lives, even in the difficult things of life, because He is a Father who truly knows best what is Good for us!

The third attitude God is asking from us in our prayer, is an attitude of confidence in His Divine Love for us. Because we are fallen human beings, we often project our imperfections onto God. We often believe that God is angry, resentful and vengeful. We often fail to open our hearts to Him, because we are afraid of Him. Jesus once said to one of the Saints, I think it was St. Theresa Lisieux: “I know you came here this morning to tell me about your sins. I am not interested in your sins. All I want from you is your friendship!” This does not mean I should not be sorry for my sins, it means that I should come to God seeking His friendship even when I have sinned; because that is what God is seeking from me!

Finally, God our Father is the model for all fatherhood. He is the infinitely generous Father and the wisest of all fathers; He will never deceive us by giving us stones. He always seeks our good and does the good for us!

When life is going smoothly, it is easy to believe; however, it is also easy to take our relationship with God the Father and Jesus and the Holy Spirit for granted. God does not want a glancing relationship with us. He desires our intimate friendship with Him. He asks us to be patient with our search for Him in prayer, and He tells us that He will always act to this end! The greatest proof of this truth, is the Eucharist and Holy Communion with God in Jesus.

I have taught you this prayer that I pray in every single Eucharist at the Consecration: "I give myself, I abandon myself and I surrender myself to You, who has given yourself, abandoned yourself and surrendered yourself to me!" Keep on asking, keep on seeking and keep on knocking with confidence; because He never, never gives up seeking you!