

Sunday Message

17TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

THE WORD

Year C • 27 July 2025 • Psalter Week 1



SAY A LITTLE PRAYER

LUKE 11:1-13

Throughout his Gospel, Luke devotes a lot of time to the prayer of Jesus. He presents Jesus as the best model of how to pray as well as a teacher of prayer. Today's Gospel combines both of these aspects: when the disciples see Jesus at prayer, they ask him to teach them how to pray.

Jesus responds first by teaching them a form of prayer. For those of us used to the Our Father, Luke's words might seem unusual. The Church has taken its official form of the Lord's Prayer from St Matthew's version. The differences are not great. Matthew's version is longer than Luke's and more polished. Luke's may be closer to what Jesus originally taught the disciples.

The prayer is followed by a parable about a neighbour who refuses to take no for an answer. A couple of details about houses in the Galilean countryside at the time of Jesus might help to make it clearer. The entire family would normally spread their sleeping mats on a raised platform at one end of the living room and curl up for a night's sleep close to one another. (Only the rich could afford separate bedrooms.) When bedtime came, the one lamp the family owned was extinguished. Lighting it again was a chore. The best one might hope for was that the cooking fire outside the house still had enough embers to kindle it. The door was fastened with a massive wooden bar.

A visitor knocking after the family had gone to bed wasn't welcome. Getting up to open the door meant clambering over sleeping children and babies. Opening the door in the dark wasn't easy. One can imagine Jesus' hearers smiling at the stupidity of a neighbour who would cause such chaos. But this man isn't put off. His incessant knocking will waken the children anyway, not to mention any dog or neighbour within earshot. With bad grace, the father hands over the loaf, not for friendship's sake, but just to get rid of him.

The third part of the Gospel uses the parable's key words as an instruction on prayer. Prayer is asking, it is searching; it is, if necessary, banging on the door until God hears. This homely parable, although true to life, runs the risk of presenting God as a grudging giver, so Jesus adds two little examples of fatherly concern that hark back to the opening word of the prayer, "Abba" – the intimate name for addressing one's father. Good fathers don't play dangerous games with their children, giving them stones instead of bread or snakes or scorpions for eggs or fish.

The message is clear: if we call God Abba, then God will give us not just what we ask for but will even share the life of his Spirit with us. ■

DO

Distractions are a constant challenge to prayer. When it happens just refocus, and get back on track.

PRAY

Pray for those for whom prayer is difficult or who have given up on God.

REFLECT

In today's first reading, Abraham pleads bargains with God, like a defence counsel before a judge. Abraham isn't afraid to tell God exactly what he wants, to come straight out and say it. He is persistent – and his prayer works. It is clear that he has a deep and intimate friendship with God.

St Teresa of Avila said that prayer should be like a conversation with a friend who knows you even better than you know yourself. How many of us do that? How many of us see God as a companion on the journey through life?

We don't just go to a friend when we want something – to borrow money or the lawn mower. We go to a friend for joy, comfort, companionship, affirmation, advice, love.

We go to our friends because they enrich us and challenge us. And we want to give to them some of what they give to us. They share our hardships with us as well as our joys, and they make us laugh.

They enable us to be our best selves.

All relationships need work if they are to flourish, and it's the same when it comes to our relationship with God. How often do you pray? Why do you pray? What might you need to change in order to have the kind of friendly relationship with God that Abraham had? ■

SAY

"Lord, I know you are close to me and that you love me. Thank you for giving me what I need. Amen."

LEARN

Prayer is about our relationship with God.

Prayer is at the heart of the Christian way of life.

The Christian trusts in the Lord, even when the Lord doesn't seem to answer our prayer or answer as we would wish.

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

*God is in his holy place,
God who unites those who dwell in his house;
he himself gives might and strength to his people.*

COLLECT

O God, protector of those who hope in you, without whom nothing has firm foundation, nothing is holy, bestow in abundance your mercy upon us and grant that, with you as our ruler and guide, we may use the good things that pass in such a way as to hold fast even now to those that ever endure. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

FIRST READING Genesis 18:20-32

A reading from the Book of Genesis. In those days: The LORD said, 'Because the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great and their sin is very grave, I will go down to see whether they have done altogether according to the outcry that has come to me. And if not, I will know.' So the men turned from there and went towards Sodom, but Abraham still stood before the LORD.

Then Abraham drew near and said, 'Will you indeed sweep away the righteous with the wicked? Suppose there are fifty righteous within the city. Will you then sweep away the place and not spare it for the fifty righteous who are in it? Far be it from you to do such a thing, to put the righteous to death with the wicked, so that the righteous fare as the wicked! Far be that from you! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do what is just?' And the LORD said, 'If I find at Sodom fifty righteous in the city, I will spare the whole place for their sake.' Abraham answered and said, 'Behold, I have undertaken to speak to the Lord, I who am but dust and ashes. Suppose five of the fifty righteous are lacking. Will you destroy the whole city for lack of five?' And he said, 'I will not destroy it if I find forty-five there.' Again he spoke to him and said, 'Suppose forty are found there.' He answered, 'For the sake of forty I will not do it.' Then he said, 'Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak. Suppose thirty are found there.' He answered, 'I will not do it, if I find thirty there.' He said, 'Behold, I have undertaken to speak to the Lord. Suppose twenty are found there.' He answered, 'For the sake of twenty I will not destroy it.' Then he said, 'Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak again but this once. Suppose ten are found there.' He answered, 'For the sake of ten I will not destroy it.'

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM Psalm 138(137):1-2a, 2bc, 3, 6-7b, 7c-8, R.3a

R: *On the day I called, you answered me, O Lord.*

- I thank you, LORD, with all my heart; you have heard the words of my mouth. In the presence of the angels I praise you. I bow down towards your holy Temple. **R.**
- I give thanks to your name for your merciful love and your faithfulness. For you have exalted over all your name and your promise. On the day I called, you answered me; you increased the strength of my soul. **R.**
- The LORD is high, yet he looks on the lowly, and the haughty he knows from afar. You give me life though I walk amid affliction; you stretch out your hand against the anger of my foes. **R.**
- With your right hand you save me; the LORD will accomplish this for me. O Lord, your merciful love is eternal; discard not the work of your hands. **R.**

SECOND READING Colossians 2:12-14

A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Colossians. Brothers and sisters: You have been buried with Christ in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God who raised him from the dead. And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, by cancelling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

ACCLAMATION BEFORE THE GOSPEL Romans 8:15bc

R: *Alleluia, alleluia.*

You have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, 'Abba! Father!'

R: *Alleluia.*

GOSPEL Luke 11:1-13

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke.

Jesus was praying in a certain place, and when he finished, one of his disciples said to him, 'Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples.' And he said to them, 'When you pray, say:

'Father, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come. Give us each day our daily bread, and forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive everyone who is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation.'

And he said to them, 'Which of you who has a friend will go to him at midnight and say to him, "Friend, lend me three loaves, for a friend of mine has arrived on a journey and I have nothing to set before him"; and he will answer from within, "Do not bother me; the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed. I cannot get up and give you anything"? I tell you, though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, yet because of his impudence he will rise and give him whatever he needs. And I tell you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened. What father among you, if his son asks for a fish, will instead of a fish give him a serpent; or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!'

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Accept, O Lord, we pray, the offerings which we bring from the abundance of your gifts, that through the powerful working of your grace these most sacred mysteries may sanctify our present way of life and lead us to eternal gladness. Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

*Bless the Lord, O my soul,
and never forget all his benefits. .*

Or

*Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.
Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God.*

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

We have consumed, O Lord, this divine Sacrament, the perpetual memorial of the Passion of your Son; grant, we pray, that this gift, which he himself gave us with love beyond all telling, may profit us for salvation.

Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.