

17th Sunday in Ordinary Time, 24 July 2022

Scriptures: Genesis 18:20-32; Colossians 2:12-14; Luke 11:1-13

Homily: Fr. Ken

In the liturgical year cycle of scriptural readings, we listen to the Gospel story of the time when one of Jesus' disciples asked him: "Lord, teach us to pray". And Jesus responds, teaching them what has become the most well-known prayer of all, "The Lord's Prayer".

The disciples who followed Jesus wanted to live life fully. It is the deepest human desire inside every person. Watching Jesus at prayer prompted one of his followers to ask for the secret: "How do you do that? What is the secret? What is it that makes you the person that you are; the person that we so admire and want to imitate?"

In listening to Jesus, in his sermons and addresses to the crowds, it was possible to see and to admire a fully developed human person, a wise and contented man. Maybe this quiet prayer was the key to his personality. "Teach us to pray" is the request.

The answer that Jesus gives to his disciples is not merely a prayer, a form of words. Rather, it is a whole approach to life, a whole new way of living, a true spirituality.

The words that Jesus speaks are a revelation to us of the meaning and purpose of life. They form the blueprint of life for us in this world.

Are you looking for the true way of life, the way to joy and authentic living in this world? Look no further, Jesus says, let these words be your way of life.

Call on God as children call on their parents. Revere God's name, and so give honor to everyone. Ask for daily bread, and so learn how to share life in this world. Seek forgiveness, and so realize your own weakness and failings. Forgive others, even as you walk in the midst of affliction. And pray to be kept safe from temptations to depart from the ways of goodness.

In the Gospel, Jesus is teaching us to pray as he prays. Jesus is training us to acquire and develop the inner attitudes that he has, that is, to become sons and daughters of God, as he is the Son of God; to open ourselves to the voice of God; to have a listening heart.

It reminds us of the story of King Solomon in the Hebrew Scriptures. Given the responsibility of governing a nation, Solomon is invited to ask for whatever he wants. Solomon replies: "Give your servant a heart to understand how to discern between good and evil, for who could govern this people of yours that is so great?" God is pleased with Solomon. He did not ask for a long life or riches, but for a discerning spirit, for a listening heart.

Jesus teaches us to pray always. Let your life be a prayer, lived in the presence of God, whose love for you is eternal.

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