

Seventeenth Week in Ordinary Time Homily:

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

We gather to celebrate the 17th Sunday in Ordinary time. Prayer is something we all do, yet often struggle to understand fully. There is we feel like God is close and listening, the other time we wonder if He even hears us at all. Today's readings invite us to see Prayer, not just as asking for things, but as entering into a deep, and trusting relationship with our loving and merciful God.

The first reading taken from the book of Genesis presents us Abraham in a deep conversation with God, interceding on behalf of the people of Sodom. Abraham stands before God, and dares to ask, "would you sweep away the righteous with the wicked? Would you not spare the city for the sake of fifty righteous?" And so, begins his bold negotiation, gradually lowering the number down to ten. At each step God agrees, showing His patience and Mercy.

Abraham's example invites us to approach God not with fear or rejection, but with trust in God's justice and Mercy. Like Abraham, we live in a world full of injustice, where the cries of the poor still rise up to God. We're invited to take these cries into our own hearts and bring them before the Lord. Abraham reminds us that God welcomes our questions, our persistence, and our hope.

May we too pray boldly for our communities, trusting that the Lord of the Earth is both Just and Merciful.

One day, when I was in ESL, I went in Indiana for summer vacation, and there, I visited a family. One of the parents shared with me a story that he remembered growing up, going with his parents to the toy store. His eyes were focused at all the figures, but what really caught his heart was a battery-operated helicopter. He wanted it so badly that he asked his parents for it. But they said no. It was expensive, and instead, they got him another toy.

So, was his prayer answered? Yes and no. Yes, because they listened and gave him a reply. No, because he did not get exactly what he asked for.

The Gospel taken from Luke sheds light on what Prayer truly means. Jesus' disciples ask Him, "Lord, teach us to pray." In response, He gives them the "Lord's Prayer", words that remind us that God is a loving Father, who wants us to trust Him with our needs, our sins and our fears. **Prayer is not just about getting what we want; it is about building relationship our relationship with God, who knows what is best for us.**

Jesus then tells a story about a man who knocks on his neighbor's door at midnight asking for bread. At first, the neighbor refuses, but eventually, he helps him. Jesus says that if even a reluctant neighbor will respond, how much more will God, who loves us deeply, hear our prayers? Jesus also uses the word "Anaideia", which means "shamelessness or boldness". He encourages us to pray without fear, without holding back, because God is a loving Father, and we need not to be embarrassed to ask. He invites us to "ask, seek, and knock", and to keep the conversation alive with persistence and hope.

But why do some prayers seem unanswered? Sometimes God says “not yet”, because the timing is not right. Sometimes it is “no”, because what we ask for is not truly good for us. And sometimes the answer comes in ways we do not expect, because God has something even better in mind. What we can always trust is that God hears us, cares for us, and gives what we truly need, especially the gift of His own Spirit.

So, let us pray with trust and boldness, like children with a loving parent, keep asking, keep seeking, because our Father delights to hear us and bless us.

This week, take a few minutes, each day to pray boldly for someone else in need, trusting that God hears you.

May God bless us all.