

17th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME; Cycle C; July 27th 2025
Genesis 18:20-32; Colossians 2:12-14; Luke 11: 1-13

Dear Sisters & Brothers,

In today's first reading, from the Book of Genesis, we witness Abraham being engaged in a bold negotiation with God over the fate of Sodom and Gomorrah. Abraham's intercession demonstrates both his deep reverence for God and his compassionate concern for others. Beginning with the question, **"Will you sweep away the innocent with the guilty?"** Abraham gradually reduces the number of righteous people needed to spare the city from fifty to ten.

This reading illustrates several key aspects of intercessory prayer: **persistence, humility ("I am but dust and ashes"), and confidence in God's mercy.** Abraham approaches God not as a distant deity but as one with whom he can reason and plead. On the other hand we see the patience of God in listening to the plea Abraham. It is amazing to notice the positive answer of God. This sets the foundation for understanding the relationship between human petition and divine response that Jesus will later address in the Gospel.

Luke's account of Jesus teaching the Lord's Prayer provides the centerpiece of this Sunday's liturgy. When the disciples ask Jesus to teach them to pray, he offers both a model prayer and teachings about God's generous response to our petitions. Luke's version of the Lord's Prayer is more concise than Matthew's but contains the essential elements: reverence for God's name, petition for the kingdom, request for daily needs, forgiveness, and protection from trial.

Jesus follows this prayer with two parables emphasizing persistence and God's generosity. The friend at midnight illustrates that persistence in prayer reflects our trust in God's goodness. The father giving good gifts to his children reveals that God gives not just what we ask for but what we truly need—ultimately, the Holy Spirit.

In the *'Our Father'* all the elements of an ideal prayer are present. **First of all, it starts with the acknowledgment of God as our Father and the petitioner gives glory to the name of God; seeks his kingdom and His holy will; only then he/she goes with presenting the personal needs.** Very often, when you and I pray we are so desperate to get what we need and very selfishly we only concentrate *on our needs* and even forget to thank God for the blessings we have already received. *The prayer 'Our Father' is a clear indication that we should never forget to glorify God's name and seek his kingdom and will, before we ask Him to answer our prayers.* If we pray honestly ***'thy will be done,'***

then we should be content with what God gives. Unfortunately when we pray we seek our will to be done and we get upset with God refusing to do our will.

In the second part of the gospel, using two imageries Jesus shows us how generous and caring is the Father and also how persistent we should be in our prayers. In the first story the friend's initial refusal was overcome by the persistence of his friend. **When Jesus says, "And I tell you, ask and you will receive; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you"- means that we should never fail to ask, seek and knock.** But does it mean that we are going to get everything we ask for, just because we are persistent? Our experience shows the opposite. Here again we can compare God with good parents on earth. The good parents know what is good and essential for their children, time to time. But at the same time they give the children the freedom to ask for what they feel good. The parents use their wisdom and experience to choose what is good for their children and don't have any hesitation to turn down a particular request of a child which will not be necessary for him/her.

Very often we are discouraged when we see our prayers are not answered the way we wish. Some people even leave their faith in God for not receiving what they asked for. If we really mean, **'Thy Will be done'**- then there is no reason to become upset with God. It is true, very often, when we ask God to open the door for us, please remember, though the door is not opened before us, God will open at least a window for us and He knows that it will be enough for us in that situation. And also all prayers are answered by God in His own way. Even at the critical moments the prayers of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane and on the cross were not answered the way he wished. But Jesus didn't give up his faith in the Heavenly Father. It is said that St. Monica prayed for 17 years to see her son Augustine's conversion. But her persistence in prayer was paid off; not only Augustine was converted but also became a bishop and eventually a great saint. So we should never give up our hope in prayer and should pray daily for whatever we feel good for us. But let God decide what we need. At the same time, let us have the patience and humility to accept and be content with what God the Father gives us.