

St. John the Baptist RCIA Class – January 7, 2016

I PRAY, YOU PRAY, WE PRAY

PRAYER IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

- ❖ The Church professes, “Great is the mystery of the faith!”
- ❖ This mystery requires that the faithful:
 - + Believe in it
 - + Live from it in a vital and personal relationship with the living and true God.
- ❖ **THIS RELATIONSHIP IS PRAYER.**

THE TRADITION OF PRAYER

- ❖ Prayer cannot be reduced to the spontaneous outpouring of interior impulse: in order to pray, one must have the will to pray.
- ❖ It is not enough to know what the scriptures reveal about prayer: one must also learn to pray.
- ❖ The tradition of Christian prayer is one of the ways in which the tradition of faith takes shape and grows.

PRAYER AS

❖ God's Gift

- + God desires our freedom from the bonds of sin as well as a complete and vibrant relationship with each one of us.
- + This is made possible in the first place by the free promise of salvation through Jesus' death and resurrection. Salvation is a **gift** we did not earn nor do we deserve.

PRAYER AS

❖ God's Gift

- + Our own yearnings to know and communicate with God, our creator and author of all things, result from the **gift** of faith.
- + The wonder of prayer, then, is how it is the language of a mutual love story made possible by God's **gifts** of salvation and faith.

PRAYER AS

❖ Covenant

- + Covenants often involve words or gestures sealing commitments about vital matters.
- + The heart is our hidden center, that only the Spirit of God can fully know. It is where we choose life or death. It is the place of covenant.
- + Prayer is the language of our covenant with God.

PRAYER AS

❖ Communion

- + The life of prayer is the habit of being in the presence of – or communion with - God the Father, with his Son Jesus Christ, and with the Holy Spirit.
- + Prayer is bound up with human history for it is the living relationship of humankind with God in historical events.
- + This communion of life is always possible because through Baptism, we have already been united with Christ.

PRAYER REVEALED IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

- ❖ Abraham's and Jacob's battle of faith was marked by trust in God's faithfulness and by a certainty in the victory promised to those who persevere.
- ❖ The prayer of Moses responded to God's initiative for the salvation of his people. It foreshadowed the prayer of intercession of the unique mediator, Jesus Christ.

PRAYER REVEALED IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

- ❖ The prayer of God's People . . .
 - + Flourished in the shadow of the dwelling place of God's presence on earth, the ark of the covenant and the Temple;
 - + Under the guidance of their shepherds, especially King David and of the prophets.

PRAYER REVEALED IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

- ❖ The prophets summoned the people to *conversion* of heart, while zealously seeking the face of God.
- ❖ Like Elijah, they *interceded* for the people.

PRAYER REVEALED IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

- ❖ The Psalms constitute the masterwork of prayer in the Old Testament. They present two inseparable qualities: the *personal* and *communal*.
- ❖ They extend to *all dimensions of history*, recalling God's promises already fulfilled and looking for the coming of the Messiah.
- ❖ The Psalms are an *essential and permanent* element of prayer of the Church.

THE PRAYER JESUS TAUGHT US

❖ Our Father

- + The Lord teaches us to make prayer in common for all our brethren.
- + We can adore the Father because he has caused us to be reborn.
- + Only with a humble and trusting heart are we enabled to become like children.
- + When we call God “our Father” we ought to behave as sons of God.

THE PRAYER JESUS TAUGHT US

❖ Who Art in Heaven

- + This biblical expression is not a place, but a *way of being*. God is “in” the hearts of the just.
- + God is not distant, but majestic.
- + Christians are in the flesh, but do not live according to the flesh. They spend their lives on earth, but are citizens of heaven.

THE PRAYER JESUS TAUGHT US

❖ Hallowed Be They Name

- + This is an adoration as well as the first petition of The Lord's Prayer.
- + We ask that God's name be hallowed by us, who are in him, AND by others whom God's grace still awaits.
- + The sanctification of God's depends inseparably on our *life* and our *prayer*.

THE PRAYER JESUS TAUGHT US

❖ Thy Kingdom Come

- + This refers primarily to the end-time in which we live, when the Holy Spirit completes his work on earth.
- + The kingdom of God is righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.
- + Christians have to distinguish between the growth of the Reign of God and the progress of the society and culture in which they are involved.
- + Man's vocation to eternal life fosters the energy and means to serve justice and peace.

THE PRAYER JESUS TAUGHT US

- ❖ Thy Will Be Done On Earth As It Is In Heaven
 - + His commandment is that you love one another; even as I have loved you.
 - + We ask our Father to unite our will to his Son's in order to fulfill his will, his plan of salvation for the life of the world.
 - + We are radically incapable of this, but united with Jesus and with the power of the Holy Spirit, we can surrender our will to him.

THE PRAYER JESUS TAUGHT US

❖ Give Us This Day Our Daily Bread

- + Jesus teaches us this petition because it glorifies our Father by acknowledging how good he is, beyond all goodness.
- + “Us” also expresses covenant. It recognizes him as the Father of all men and we pray for them all, in solidarity with their needs and sufferings.
- + The Father who gives us life cannot but give the material and spiritual nourishment we need.

THE PRAYER JESUS TAUGHT US

- ❖ Give Us This Day Our Daily Bread
 - + The drama of hunger in the world calls all Christians to pray fervently and exercise responsibility toward their brethren.
 - + Our bread is the “one” loaf for the “many”. The abundance of some may remedy the needs of others.
 - + Work as if everything depended on you and pray as if everything depended on God.

THE PRAYER JESUS TAUGHT US

- ❖ Give Us This Day Our Daily Bread
 - + Man does not live by bread alone, . . .
 - + There is a famine on earth. Christians must make every effort to proclaim the good news to the poor.
 - + “This day” expresses our trust in God’s faithfulness.

THE PRAYER JESUS TAUGHT US

❖ And Forgive Us Our Trespasses

- + We return to him like the prodigal son and recognize that we are sinners.
- + We confess our wretchedness with hope in his mercy.

THE PRAYER JESUS TAUGHT US

- ❖ As We Forgive Those Who Trespasses Against Us
 - + If we refuse to forgive our brothers and sisters, our hearts are closed and their hardness makes them impervious to the Father's merciful love.
 - + Christian prayer extends to the forgiveness of enemies.
 - + Forgiveness covers sins or debts.

THE PRAYER JESUS TAUGHT US

- ❖ And Lead Us Not Into Temptation
 - + We implore the Spirit for discernment and strength in our battle “between flesh and spirit”.
 - + Trials are necessary for growth, but temptation leads to sin and death.
 - + “Lead us not into temptation” implies a *decision of the heart*.
 - + God is faithful and will not let you be tempted beyond your strength.

THE PRAYER JESUS TAUGHT US

❖ But Deliver Us From Evil

- + Evil refers to Satan.
- + A person who entrusts himself to God does not dread the devil.
- + When we ask to be delivered from the Evil One, we pray as well to be freed from all evils, present, past , and future.
- + We pray in communion with the whole Church, for the deliverance of the whole human family.

THE PRAYER JESUS TAUGHT US

- ❖ For the Kingdom, the Power, and the Glory . . .
 - + God's reign and saving power are acknowledged
 - + God's name is glorified
- ❖ Amen.
 - + So be it.

PRAYER IN THE AGE OF THE CHURCH

- ❖ In the first community of Jerusalem, believers “devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of the bread, and the prayers.” This sequence is characteristic of the Church’s Prayer:
 - + founded on apostolic faith
 - + authenticated by charity
 - + nourished in the Eucharist

PRAYER IN THE AGE OF THE CHURCH

- ❖ The Holy Spirit, who teaches the Church and recalls to her all that Jesus said, also instructs her in the life of prayer, inspiring new expressions of the same basic forms of prayer:
 - + Blessing
 - + Petition
 - + Intercession
 - + Thanksgiving
 - + Praise

PRAYER IN THE AGE OF THE CHURCH

❖ Blessing

- + Because God blesses, the human heart can in return bless the One who is the source of every blessing. In blessing, Gods' gift is united to man's acceptance of it.
- + Blessing is an expression of the encounter between God and human beings. We bless God because God has blessed us. We call upon the Holy Spirit to offer our blessing to God.

PRAYER IN THE AGE OF THE CHURCH

❖ Adoration

- + Adoration exalts the greatness of the Lord who made us and the power of the Savior who sets us free from evil.
- + Adoration leads us to worship God because God is the Creator and we are the created and God is worthy of our praise and adoration. As Lord of the Universe, it is his rightful claim.

PRAYER IN THE AGE OF THE CHURCH

❖ Prayer of Petition

- + In our spontaneity we ask, beseech, plead, invoke, entreat, cry out . . . This is the most usual form of prayer.
- + Petition is the prayer in which we acknowledge our need for God.
- + Our humble asking of forgiveness is a prerequisite for righteous and humble prayer.

PRAYER IN THE AGE OF THE CHURCH

❖ Prayer of Petition

- + Our trusting humility brings us back into the light of communion between the Father and his Son Jesus Christ and with one another, so that “we receive from him whatever we ask.”
- + Christian petition is centered on the desire and search for the Kingdom to come.

PRAYER IN THE AGE OF THE CHURCH

❖ Prayer of Petition

- + We pray first for the Kingdom, then for what is necessary to welcome it and cooperate with its coming.
- + By prayer every baptized person works for the coming of the Kingdom.
- + When we share in God's saving love, we understand that *every* need can become the object of petition.

PRAYER IN THE AGE OF THE CHURCH

❖ Prayer of Intercession

- + Intercession is a special prayer of petition which leads us to pray for others, just as Jesus did.
- + Intercession is the characteristic of a heart attuned to God's mercy.
- + The intercession of Christians recognizes no boundaries. We are called to intercede for the needs of the world and for ourselves.

PRAYER IN THE AGE OF THE CHURCH

❖ Prayer of Intercession

- + The intercession of Christians recognizes no boundaries. We are called to intercede for the needs of the world and for ourselves.
- + Prayer that is only “I” centered can be idolatrous. Prayer leads us out of ourselves and toward mission in the world.

PRAYER IN THE AGE OF THE CHURCH

❖ Prayer of Thanksgiving

- + Every joy and suffering, every event and need can become the matter for thanksgiving which, properly united to Christ, should fill one's whole life.
- + “Give thanks in all circumstances”.
- + Thanksgiving grows deep within us. Every breath we draw, every event of our lives is cause for us to offer thanks to God.

PRAYER IN THE AGE OF THE CHURCH

❖ Prayer of Thanksgiving

- + The Eucharist is the ultimate prayer of thanks for the great work of salvation that continues in the Church
- + Thanksgiving grows deep within us. Every breath we draw, every event of our lives is cause for us to offer thanks to God
- + “Give thanks in all circumstances”.

PRAYER IN THE AGE OF THE CHURCH

❖ Prayer of Praise

- + Praise is the form of prayer which recognizes most immediately that *God* is GOD.
- + It is entirely disinterested (in oneself) and rises to God, lauds him, and gives him glory for his own sake, quite beyond what he has done, but simply because HE IS.
- + It is God's will that we give him thanks and praise.

THE WELLSPRINGS OF PRAYER

- ❖ By a living transmission – Tradition – the Holy Spirit in the Church teaches the children of God to pray.
- ❖ The Word of God, the liturgy of the Church, and the virtues of faith, hope, and charity are sources of prayer.
- ❖ Our everyday situations and the opportunities they offer for prayer can be the leaven to which the Lord compares the kingdom.

THE WAY OF PRAYER

- ❖ In the living tradition of prayer, each Church proposes to its faithful, according to its historical, social, and cultural context, a language for prayer: words, melodies, gestures, iconography.
- ❖ The Magisterium of the Church has the task of discerning the fidelity of these ways of praying to the tradition of the apostolic faith.

THE WAY OF PRAYER

- ❖ In Communion With the Holy Mother of God
 - + Mary, because of her faith, became the mother of believers, through whom all nations of the earth receive him who is God's own blessing: Jesus, the "fruit of the womb."
 - + When we pray to her, we are adhering with her to the plan of the Father, who sends his Son to save all men.

THE WAY OF PRAYER

- ❖ In Communion With the Holy Mother of God
 - + We can pray with and to her.
 - + The prayer of the Church is sustained by the prayer of Mary and united with it in hope.

GUIDES FOR PRAYER

- ❖ In prayer, the pilgrim Church is associated with that of the saints, whose intercession she asks.
- ❖ The different schools of Christian spirituality share in the living tradition of prayer and are precious guides to the spiritual life.
- ❖ The Christian family is the first place for education in prayer.

GUIDES FOR PRAYER

- ❖ Ordained ministers, the consecrated life, catechesis, prayer groups, and “spiritual direction” ensure assistance within the Church in the practice of prayer.
- ❖ The most appropriate places for prayer are personal or family “prayer corners”, monasteries, places of pilgrimage, and above all, the church, which is the proper place for liturgical prayer and Eucharistic adoration.

PRAYER FORMS

- ❖ Liturgical prayer is the prayer of the community, the community gathers to give God praise and worship.
- ❖ Contemplative prayer is quiet, communion with God. While there is a sense of the communal, all creation groans in prayer before the divine majesty, it can be prayed individually or in a group setting.

PRAYER FORMS

- ❖ Lectio Divina is praying with the Scriptures. We pray through the Scriptures and ask God to speak to us through them.
- ❖ Spontaneous prayer is prayer that is prayed in a group or alone. It is prayer that flows from a person's heart.

PRAYER FORMS

- ❖ Charismatic prayer can be prayed alone or most aptly in a communal setting. It is prayer that uses the gifts of the Spirit as described by St. Paul.
- ❖ Devotional prayer can be prayed alone or in a group. There is a special focus of this prayer such as the Rosary, devotions to particular saints, etc.

PRAYER FORMS

- ❖ Psalm prayer can be prayed alone or in a group setting especially when the Liturgy of the Hours is prayed. This is an ancient liturgy where the Church gathers at various hours of the day to give worship to God.
- ❖ Psalms use God's own words to pray. Every emotion of the human heart is expressed in the Psalms. If you want to begin a rich prayer life, begin by praying a Psalm every day.