

## Petition and Forgiveness

The following prayer is based on a prayer in *Sadhana: A Way to God*, by Anthony de Mello, SJ (pp. 149-152).

Read the following passage, which is how Jesus urges us to pray.

“I say to you, Ask, and it will be given you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you. For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened. Is there anyone among you who, if your child asks for a fish, will give a snake instead of a fish? Or if the child asks for an egg, will give 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!” (Luke 11:9-13).

The words are so simple, “*Ask, and it will be given to you . . . For everyone who asks receives.*” Imagine you hear Jesus saying those words to you. Ask yourself, “Do I really believe those words? What sense do they make to me? . . . Then share your answers with Jesus.

Read the following passage:

“Amen, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain,  
‘Be lifted up and thrown into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart  
but believes that what he says will happen, it shall be done for him.  
Therefore, I tell you, all that you ask for in prayer,  
believe that you will receive it and it shall be yours.  
When you stand to pray, forgive anyone against whom you have a grievance,  
so that your heavenly Father may in turn forgive you your transgressions.  
If you do not forgive others,  
neither will your Father in heaven forgive your sins” (Mk. 11:23-26).

After you have reflected on these passages and spoken to Jesus about them, be still and ask the Holy Spirit to help you to pray.

Forgive each person against whom you have a grievance...

Say to each one in your imagination, “*[name]* **I forgive you with all my heart  
in the name of Jesus Christ,  
just as the Lord has forgiven me.**”

Repeat this prayer for the person over and over again. Even if you don’t *feel* like saying it, do your best to say it with the desire to forgive. When we pray “*in the name of Jesus,*” it brings his presence into the prayer. The prayer will be effective through the power of his name. In time, you will find that your heart will be freed from the bitterness of anger and vengeance.

Now ask the Lord to fill your heart with the faith that makes petitionary prayer omnipotent ... Repeat this prayer: “**Lord, I believe; help my unbelief**” (Mk. 9:24).

Then ask for the gift you want from the Lord: health, success in some enterprise...

Imagine the Lord giving this gift to you and imagine yourself joyfully praising him for this... Imagine the Lord withholding the gift from you as he floods your heart with peace and you joyfully praise him for this.