



Bringing Home the Word

Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time (C)

July 28, 2019

The Five Prayers

By Mary Katharine Deeley

I tell my students there are five prayers: Please; Thank you; I'm sorry; Wow; and Yes, I will. The words change but, in essence, every prayer implies one or more of these attitudes: petition, thanksgiving, contrition, praise, and obedience. In his book *Man's Quest for God*, Abraham Joshua Heschel says prayer is "the invitation to God to intervene in our lives." God does—sometimes to our surprise, sometimes in ways we can't imagine, but always in a way that changes us.

Jesus knew this when he taught his disciples the Our Father. In it, we hear words of praise and petition. We hear contrition: "Forgive us...as we forgive..." (11:4). We hear obedience: "thy kingdom come..." and "thy will be done..." (Luke 11:2; Matthew 6:10). Jesus goes on to say that when we pray, God will send his Spirit to guide us and give us what we need: "our daily bread..." (11:3). No wonder the Lord's Prayer is a model prayer for everyone.

In our prayer, we have to remember that there is often a difference between what we need and what we desire. In the movie *Shadowlands*, C. S. Lewis is depicted reflecting on the nature of prayer as his wife is dying. Asked why he prayed, he responds, "I pray because I can't help myself. I pray because I'm helpless. I pray because the need flows out of me all the time, waking and sleeping. It doesn't change God; it changes me." That's the power of the Spirit—to change our hearts until all our prayers become wow (praise) and yes (obedience). +

*"I pray because
I can't help myself.
I pray because
I'm helpless."*

Sunday Readings

Genesis 18:20–32

The LORD replied: If I find fifty righteous people in the city of Sodom, I will spare the whole place for their sake.

Colossians 2:12–14

You were buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the power of God.

Luke 11:1–13

[Jesus said,] "Ask and you will receive; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you."

A Word from Pope Francis

Media can help us to feel closer to one another, creating a sense of the unity of the human family, which can in turn inspire solidarity and serious efforts to ensure a more dignified life for all. Good communication helps us to grow closer, to know one another better and, ultimately, to grow in unity.

—World Communications Day,
June 1, 2014



REFLECTION QUESTIONS



- In addition to asking God for things, do I remember to offer prayers of praise and thanksgiving?
- Can I make time to pray more often than I do now?

Becoming Catholic: Chrysteile's Journey

By Jamie Taylor and
Chrysteile Murphy

Chrysteile Murphy's journey to the Catholic Church underscores the unique nature of each individual's quest for God.

Chrysteile's parents, sixties free spirits, felt she should decide about God herself. In her search for God, she explored many different faiths. None answered her questions. Some just added to her confusion.

Chrysteile's initial exposure to Catholicism was negative. An acquaintance's ill-formed understanding of the sacrament of reconciliation—"do anything you want to and go to confession"—didn't sit well with her. Questions remained—all of which would be answered when she walked through the doors of Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Tampa.

Chrysteile's deep yearning to learn all she could about God and Christ found a home in this beautiful church with welcoming priests and loving parishioners. Her parish experience differed from anything she'd been told about Christianity. Yet she craved more.

Dirty Hair, Clean Soul

One Sunday during Mass, it was announced that the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) would start soon. With sweet anticipation, Chrysteile



came each week to hear the topic of discussion and be enriched by it.

Chrysteile had an awakening during the RCIA process at Sacred Heart. She and her fellow candidates and catechumens learned Church history and the richness of the sacraments. At the Easter Vigil, Chrysteile

experienced the greatest joy in her spiritual life: Her own baptism.

Chrysteile still recalls the immense anticipation and, all at once, a great peace. The water was cold, but that was irrelevant to her. God's redemptive love flowed over Chrysteile, and she was washed clean of sin.

"When Fr. George anointed us with the chrism oil, confirmed us, and we were sealed with the Holy Spirit, I was humbled," Chrysteile recalled. "No words can describe the emotions that fill you up during this entire process." She didn't wash her hair for four days! The fragrance of the chrism oil reminded her of this experience, so she held onto it as long as possible.

Belonging to the Catholic Church was an important choice for Chrysteile. Her faith in God and Christ took root and flourished there. "There is nothing like coming together as one body in Christ at Mass on Sunday and to experience the great love that is the Eucharist," she said.

Come and See

Chrysteile jumped right in to her parish's activities. She's a eucharistic minister, a member of the Young Adults Group, and helps lead the Lost and Found Ministry for feeding the homeless in the area.

The priests at her parish always stress the importance of using one's time and talents for bringing about the kingdom of God. Chrysteile loves to cook and has found a special way to use this gift to feed the hungry. Every other Saturday, a group of parishioners prepares a hot meal for more than 150 people.

"Everything that God has promised to us is present in the Eucharist: God's most precious gift," Chrysteile said. "Coming to the Catholic Church and this glorious faith is the most humbling, rewarding, and life-changing thing you could ever do for yourself." Chrysteile believes that, for those who are curious about the faith, if you're willing to open your heart, you will find what she has found in abundance. +



Lord, you came to offer God's forgiveness to all people. Help me forgive my brothers and sisters from the heart.

—From *Faithful Meditations for Every Day in Ordinary Time*, Rev. Warren J. Savage and Mary Ann McSweeney

WEEKDAY READINGS

July 29–August 3

Monday, St. Martha: Ex 32:15–24, 30–34 / Jn 11:19–27 or Lk 10:38–42

Tuesday, Weekday: Ex 33:7–11; 34:5b–9, 28 / Mt 13:36–43

Wednesday, St. Ignatius of Loyola: Ex 34:29–35 / Mt 13:44–46

Thursday, St. Alphonsus Liguori: Ex 40:16–21, 34–38 / Mt 13:47–53

Friday, Weekday: Lv 23:1, 4–11, 15–16, 27, 34b–37 / Mt 13:54–58

Saturday, Weekday: Lv 25:1, 8–17 / Mt 14:1–12