



Bringing Home the Word

Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time (C)
July 24, 2022

Praying to Our Good, Good Father

By Fr. Mark Haydu, LC

Learning to pray well is perhaps the most important skill we can learn. It's one thing that will carry us through life, all the way to heaven. We might as well get good at it!

Jesus was often found praying, but if he was God, why was this necessary? Jesus prayed because he longed to experience the love of his Father. He prayed because he wanted to, not because he had to. Amidst the demands of his mission and the cross looming over

him, Jesus felt an existential need to seek strength in his only source of love.

This "being caught up in love" was evident to those who watched Jesus pray. Looking at him, the apostles longed to experience what he experienced, so they asked him "teach us to pray." He began, "Our Father..."

When we pray we're not in dialog with a demanding commander but with a caring, protecting Father. He is a good, good Father. The last thing he wants is to see his children suffering or in want. He wants to provide exactly what we really need—not necessarily what we pout about! Our role is to trust and abandon ourselves into his hands through prayer.

This is where the life of grace comes in. Grace—God's Fatherly love shared with us at baptism, and which continues through the help of his Holy Spirit—is our greatest treasure. One way to grow in prayer is to ask yourself what will help this grace, this God-shared love, grow in your heart.

Prayer will carry us through life, all the way to heaven. We might as well get good at it!

A Word from Pope Francis

Prayer is a kind of musical staff, where we arrange the melody of our lives. It is not in contrast with daily work; it does not contradict the many small obligations and appointments; if anything, it is the place where every action finds its meaning, its reason and its peace.

General Audience, June 9, 2021



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,] "And I tell you, ask and you will receive; seek and you will find."

REFLECTION QUESTIONS



- As I pray the Our Father slowly and thoughtfully, what is one phrase that stands out?
- What is one thing I can do to improve my prayer life?

Blessing's Ultimate Form

By Fr. Donald Willard, CSsR

What is a blessing? I've heard people use the phrase "God bless you" in a manner similar to the way they say, "Have a nice day." At other times, people ask for a blessing as if they are asking a favor from God. Finally, some people ask for a Bible to be blessed or for a special blessing immediately after receiving the Eucharist. And while we should desire blessings, the act of blessing has a much fuller meaning than many of us realize.

An essential element of worship is prayer. The four traditional types of prayer are blessing and adoration, thanksgiving, petition, and intercession. Therefore, at a deeper level, a blessing is a particular manner of worship. It stems from a profound adoration that is expressed through a desire to be more like the beloved. For example, sometimes a young child will act like a parent because the child wants to be similar to the parent. This is an outward expression of an internal disposition of respect, admiration, and love.

By definition, a blessing is the act of sanctifying someone or something. When someone or something is sanctified, it has become holy, and to be holy means to be set aside for the purposes of God. The person or object is brought into the presence of God, or we might say, "brought closer to God." This is not to say God isn't everywhere; rather, the blessing is our



acknowledgment that this person or object belongs to God and that it is God who determines the right order, purpose, and design of all.

Thus, the blessed object or person is to be in conformity with the will of God. For example, if a person wants a car blessed, the car now exists to do the will of God, not merely the will of the person. This car now must be used in the service of God.

At the level of blessing, we are expressing the desire to be more like God. Through the blessing, we give our free will to God and allow God to be Lord of our lives. We are saying, "Lord,

you are Lord of all, make me holy as you are holy, to do your will in all things, all places, and all times, so that I may be more like you."

For a Catholic, this statement finds no fuller meaning than in the blessing that comes when we receive the Eucharist—the Real Presence of Christ. When we give our lives as a gift to God, it is the ultimate form of blessing. And through the action of the Holy Spirit, God gives us his divine life through the gift of his Son.

A blessing is our acknowledgment that this person or object belongs to God.



*Father God, your name is holy.
Help us to do your will in all things.
Give us bread to strengthen us.
Forgive us and guide us
to walk in your way. Amen.*

—From *Celebrating the Gospels: A Guide for Parents and Teachers*, by Gaynell Cronin

WEEKDAY READINGS

July 25–30

Monday, St. James:
2 Cor 4:7–15 / Mt 20:20–28

Tuesday, Sts Joachim and Anne:
Sir 44:1, 1–15 / Mt 13:16–17

Wednesday, Weekday:
Jer 15:10, 16–21 / Mt 13:44–46

Thursday, Weekday:
Jer 18:1–6 / Mt 13:47–53

Friday, Sts. Martha, Mary, and Lazarus:
Jer 26:1–9 / Jn 11:19–27

Saturday, Weekday:
Jer 26:11–16, 24 / Mt 14:1–12

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