

7th Sunday after Pentecost July 28, 2019

Luke 11:1—13

May the words of my mouth and the meditation of all our hearts be acceptable in thy site, oh Lord, our strength and our redeemer. Amen

Prayer. That is the topic of today's gospel. There are so many ways to pray, so many different reasons to pray. Prayers for yourself, your family, friends, for groups, committees, selling of property, weddings, death and more. Look in the back of your red prayer book. It is full of prayers for so many occasions. Or you can just make one up on the fly. Here is the key, when you pray, know who you are talking too and dig deep within your sole to be as honest and sincere as you can possibly be. Give all of yourself in your prayer. For prayer is your window to heaven and to the Holy ones.

This week we will be praying for our beloved Jeff Prozzo, whom I liked to call "the Reverend". I will miss Jeff. His dry humor and quick wit. Well, quick may not be exactly what you would call Jeff. He talked deliberately slow. But he was witty and when he spoke, he usually had something important or informative to say. I loved how before he read a lesson, he would take a minute to give some background of the lesson. It was typically a historical prospective of the times that we were reading about. He would share his extensive knowledge of the bible, people, places and events. I will miss Jeff. Let us pray for him and for Gail. This has to be a devastating and difficult time for her and their family.

In the Gospel of Luke 11: 1-13, we find Jesus praying and after, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples". Jesus said to them, "When you pray, say:" the Lords Prayer...or at least a versus of the Lord's Prayer. You know, this prayer has become something that is recited at times without thinking what we are saying. I am guilty of it. The words just come

out but I may be thinking about coffee hour or dinner plans. Oops, sorry. But I do love the prayer. As I was doing my research on today's Gospel of Luke, I looked for some information on the Lord's Prayer and found something interesting that I would like to share. Not the total excerpt but just enough so you get the jest of the Lord's Prayer...and some of you may just relate.

I would like to read to you this morning a dramatization of this prayer. Someone is praying the Lord's Prayer and God breaks in to answer.

Our Father who art in Heaven...

'Yes?'

Don't interrupt me. I'm Praying...

'But you called Me.'

Called you? I didn't call you. I'm praying. Our Father who art in Heaven.

'There, you did it again.'

Did what?

'Called Me. You said, "Our Father who art in Heaven..." Here I am. What's on your mind?'

But I didn't mean anything by it. I was, you know, just saying my prayers for the day. I always say the Lord's Prayer. It makes me feel good, kind of like getting my duty done.

'All right. Go on.'

Hallowed be Thy name.

'Hold it. What do you mean by that?'

By what?

'By "Hallowed be Thy name."'

It means.... it means.... good grief, I don't know what it means. How should I know? It's just part of the prayer. By the way, what does it mean?

'It means "honored," "Holy," "Wonderful."'

Hey, that makes sense. I never thought about what "Hallowed" meant before. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven.

'Do you really mean that?'

Sure, why not?

'What are you going to do about it?'

Do? Nothing, I guess. I just think it would be neat if you got control of everything down here like you have up there.

'Have I got control of you?'

Well, I go to church.

'That isn't what I asked you. What about those bad habits of yours? Your selfishness? You've really got a problem there, you know. And then there's the way you spend your money...all on yourself.'

Stop picking on me! I'm just as good as some of the rest of my church family.

'Excuse me....I thought you were praying for My will to be done. If that is to happen, it will have to start with the ones who are praying for it. Like you, for example.'

Oh all right! I guess I do have some hang-ups. Now that you mention it, I could probably name some others.

I'll stop there as I am sure you get what is happening here. Have you ever thought of praying the Lord's Prayer in that light? What would God say or is saying to you as you pray that prayer?

If we truly stop and think about what we are praying for in the Lord's Prayer, it is truly a powerful prayer, a perfect prayer, a prayer that does handle all the aspects of our lives?

The Lord's Prayer is an inclusive prayer, a non-selfish prayer...there are no I's or My or ME. A grace prayer...we say it just before communion. The perfect prayer for us to use to **develop** our lives with God through Jesus Christ.

Prayer. I believe prayer is your personal connection to Heaven, to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and to God Himself. Prayer is meant to be bold, persistent, calming, loving, earnest, and even uncomfortable; it's meant to get results. Jesus says, "Ask, and it will be given you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you." What does Jesus mean when he says, "For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened"? It just doesn't always seem true.

What is happening in your world today that requires your shameless persistence in prayer? What is happening in our lives that needs to change? What are we seeking? What are we hoping for? Jesus promises us that if we knock the door will be opened, but we might have to knock hard and often; we might have to ask others to join us. Jesus invites us to pray with the assurance that God is listening; and not only that, but God is acting on our behalf, ready to respond and to transform our lives and the world around us. My belief in prayer and the connection that I have with the one I am prayer to makes my life fuller, stronger, happier and healthier. It helps me to reboot sometimes, to refocus, to wake up and smell the tea (hey, I don't like coffee) or to just express my gratitude to the gifts and blessings that are a part of my life. Prayer works.

Let me tell you a recent event. Leslie is selling her home in Washburn and moving to Caribou so her daughter can be at a larger school with better opportunities. The house was on the market for about 6 weeks with no interest...zero. It's a tough market in Washburn and it is a really great house. Her mother told her to purchase a statue of Saint Joseph, the builder who taught Jesus his trade. So she went on amazon and ordered the statue. When it arrived, she and her mother went out and buried St. Joseph next to the for sale sign and said a specific prayer asking him to watch over her home and help to find a sincere, honest buyer. Within a week, she had an offer from a young couple that was looking for just this home. Did it really work? I believe it did and more importantly, Leslie believes it did AND she believes more in the power of prayer than she did before. She has put an offer in on a home in Caribou and she went right back out and prayed to St Joseph again. That made me so happy. Pray works in so many ways.

My friends, Jesus has taught us how to pray. He has told us the importance of prayer. And he assure us that he and the Father himself is listening...as well as all the Saints I may add. It is your obligation to HIM to pray and talk and communicate your love and blessings, pain and sorrows, and everything in between. You will live a richer more fulfilling life. And if you need a place to start...begin with the Lord's Prayer.

For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.

