



Holy Gospel of Jesus Christ according to Saint *Matthew* 6: 7-15.

Jesus said to his disciples: "In praying, do not babble like the pagans, who think that they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them. Your Father knows what you need before you ask him. This is how you are to pray: 'Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy Kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.' If you forgive others their transgressions, your heavenly Father will forgive you. But if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your transgressions."

Introductory Prayer:

Lord, I am aware that you know what is best for me, and that is why I believe in you. You are more interested in my spiritual well-being than I am, and that is why I trust in you. You always give me your loving forgiveness in spite of my sins, and that is why I love you.

Petition:

Lord, teach me how to pray.

1. Prayer is the Fruit of Silence:

Some people like to talk. They demand to be listened to, but they don't have the same interest in listening. However, you usually can't listen if you aren't used to silence. St. Theresa of Calcutta once wrote that prayer is the fruit of silence. Jesus wants us to understand that prayer is more about listening than about talking. When you are with someone who knows much about a topic that interests you, you limit yourself to asking questions and dedicate yourself to listening. Jesus is the revealer of God the Father. That means our main interest in prayer should be asking Jesus, our Lord, about his Father and then dedicating ourselves to listening.

2. God is Our Loving Father:

Jesus tells us that God the Father knows what we need before we ask him. Still, we should ask, because in asking we become aware that we have needs that only God our

Father can grant us. We learn to ask God what we most need for our salvation. That is why Jesus taught us the "Our Father." Praying the "Our Father" reminds us that he is the father of all, and therefore every human person is truly our brother. In praying the "Our Father," we essentially ask for three things: that God have the first place in our lives, that he give us our material and spiritual sustenance, and that he grant us his forgiveness.

3. Forgive in Order to Be Forgiven:

Jesus emphasizes the importance of forgiveness. As the First Letter of John reminds us, we are all sinners (cf. 1:8). One of the essential characteristics of Christian life is seeking to encounter Christ's loving mercy. We can really experience it only when we put it into practice ourselves. We can admire a person who parachutes off a plane, but we won't understand the experience until we skydive ourselves. We grasp the true meaning of mercy when we forgive others. Our mercy will not be the same as Christ's: He never sinned, and therefore he forgives us even though we don't deserve it. If Christ has forgiven us, how can we dare not to forgive others?

Conversation with Christ:

Lord, I thank you for teaching me to pray to the Father. I don't always pray as much as I should. Please help me to pray more and better. Please help me to want with all my heart to give God the first place in my life, preferring his will to mine. Help me to treat others as I would like them to treat me, forgiving them when they offend me.

Resolution:

I will dedicate a specific time to prayer each day.