

WSC REFLECTION GUIDE

Readings: Gn 18:20-32 Ps 138:1-3, 6-8 Col 2:12-14 Lk 11:1-13	17 th Sunday in Ordinary Time July 25, 2010
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Word:	The Lord's power shall be upon His committed servants.
Theme:	The Lord's committed servants persist in praying for the needs of others. [Intercession]
Promise:	<i>"For everyone who asks, receives; and the one who seeks, finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened."</i>(Lk 11:10)

Reflection:

It was customary in Old Testament days, for Rabbis to teach their disciples a simple prayer that they can use at any given time. John the Baptist did this with his disciples, and in today's gospel, we find the disciples asking Jesus to do the same for them, "teach us how to pray," they asked. But it is not just the disciples of Jesus who long to pray, but don't know how. Hence, this passage from Luke not only introduces the disciples to a prayer pattern, it also introduces us to a model of prayer we can all use. This prayer expresses the longings of our souls. Everyone has prayed the Lord's Prayer at one time or another, though there may have been times when we said the prayer automatically.

Prayer is what we are about, not just here in our Community, but as people committed to Jesus Christ. Prayer is what nurtures our dialogue with the Lord, as when we say the Our Father with reverence during the Eucharistic celebration or during communion. Throughout the day, we call out to the Lord in prayer whether it is through a simple prayer of grace before meals, in wordless meditation, or by speaking to the Lord through uttering a mantra like – "*God loves me unconditionally, God forgives me, God is with me*". For some, prayer takes the form of devotionals like the Rosary, or the usual night prayer. Our days are meant to be united with God in prayer because prayer is an expression of who we are as creatures created in the image and likeness of God.

Over the past few weeks, the attendance level at the Community's corporate worship has dropped considerably though it has not yet reached what we may call a critical level. Whatever the reason, our members are forgetting that the collective prayer of the Community is what strengthens each and every individual member and the collaborative prayers is what intensifies the presence of God in the Community. Suffice it to say, members who have not been regularly attending the corporate worship are missing an opportunity to gather as a church.

We may be forgetting that we all need each other for our prayer life to grow. We need each other so we can really celebrate God's presence to such an extent that He becomes present on the altar through the Sacraments. Sometimes, we come upon people who say that they don't go to church because they pray on their own. While it may be great to know what people are praying, they should also know that they are depriving themselves of the greatest

prayer, the prayer of Jesus Christ at the Last Supper, on the Cross and at Easter. It is great that they are praying alone, but by refusing to join the Community in prayer, they are depriving themselves of the very presence of God in the Eucharist and at corporate worship.

When Jesus the Christ first taught his disciples how to pray, he said that it must begin by calling God – Father. This first word reminds us that in prayer we are not coming to just anyone from whom we can derive some benefit, but to a Father who actually delights in supplying our needs.

The Lord's Prayer practically spans all of life itself. It covers our present need as it instructs us to pray for our daily sustenance. And this is based on the manna from heaven that God showered his people in the wilderness to supply their needs, as told in Exodus 16:11-21. We read that only enough for the needs of the day can be gathered at any one time, as we are not to worry about the future, which remains unknown, but for us to live one day at a time dependent on God grace and provision.

The prayer also covers past sins for we pray for forgiveness, not only for ourselves, but also for everyone who has sinned, or has been deprived of the glory of God. This is why prayer is an event in which sinful man comes before the purity of God, who alone can wash away or forgive our transgressions through the One who took our sins away by his suffering and death on the cross.

This prayer also covers trials and tribulations that are yet to come. Temptation means testing, but it involves much more than mere temptation by the evil one. Every given situation presents a challenge to man who, because of the environment in which we live, is infected with the seven deadly sins of pride, envy, gluttony, sloth (laziness), lust, and avarice. Hence, man's integrity and fidelity are always put to the test. These are evil man cannot escape, but we can successfully face these temptations and other forms of testing through prayer, with God at our side.

Someone once said that the Lord's Prayer has two great uses for every individual who needs to pray. When used at the beginning of every devotional prayer, it opens the person who is praying to all kinds of holy desires that will lead the individual to the right pattern of prayer. When used at the end of the devotion, it summarizes all that man has prayed for in the presence of God.

And Paul in the second reading offers a suggestion on how man can come into the heart of God through perseverance and living faith (Col. 2:6). Indeed, to persevere means to be persistent, to continue without stopping. It means to start something and see it through to the end. And when Paul urges us to persevere in our living faith, what he means is faith that includes worship of God and our struggle to inherit the salvation that we have received through Jesus the Christ and, the need for us to pass on this faith, that our spiritual brothers and sisters may also benefit from the salvation that we have all received.

Jesus concluded His teaching by saying that if you ask, it will be given to you; if you seek, you will find; and if you knock, the door will be opened to you. It should be noted here that the reference to asking, seeking and knocking apply to requests from the Holy Spirit. For it says, "How much more will the Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him." The asking, searching and knocking are in reference to Divine knowledge, understanding and wisdom. It applies to the gifts and fruit of the Holy Spirit. All of these are needed for the sanctification of the soul as it perseveres in living faith.

Suggested Personal Reflection Guide:

1. Was there any point in our spiritual journey that when we struggled in prayer. How did we overcome or cope with this struggle/s?
2. How am I exercising the gifts of the Holy Spirit in my life? What have I done to help others attain the eternal salvation that God has promised to all those who will believe in him?

Next Week's Daily Mass Reading Guide:

July 26, 2010	Jer 13:1-11; Dt 32:18-19, 20, 21; Mt 13:16-17
July 27, 2010	Jer 14:17-22; Ps 79:8, 9, 11, 13; Mt 13:35-43
July 28, 2010	Jer 15:10, 16-21; Ps 59:2-3, 4, 10-11, 17, 18; Mt 13:44-46
July 29, 2010	Jer 18:1-6; Ps 146:1-2, 3-4, 5-6; Jn 11:19-27 or Lk 10:38-42
July 30, 2010	Jer 26:1-9; Ps 69:5, 8-10, 14; Mt 13:54-58
July 31, 2010	Jer 26:11-16, 24; Ps 69:15-16, 30-31, 33-34; Mt 14:1-12

“Ignorance of the Bible is ignorance of Christ. Read your Bible daily!”