

Peace is...being grateful in prayer

Ezekiel 33: 7 *“You...I have appointed watchman for the house of Israel; when you hear me say anything, you shall warn them for me.”*

Romans 13: 10 *“Love does no evil to the neighbor; hence, love is the fulfillment of the law.”*

Matthew 18: 19 *“Amen, I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything for which they are to pray, it shall be granted to them by my heavenly Father.”*

Reflection:

It's all about relationship. We have all been appointed to be watchman: we are to help others who are spiritually in harm's way, and we are to help others hear the Word of God. We are to love our neighbor as ourselves. If someone hurts us, we are to talk to him about what he did that hurt us. If he will not listen, we are to get others involved in order to reconcile. When we have exhausted all means, we leave it to God. It is about our relationship with God, our relationships with others, and how those relationships are connected.

In the first reading, the Word says, “when you hear [the Lord] say anything.” This presupposes that we hear the Lord! We must be open; we must be watching and listening. The psalmist invites us to sing joyfully, to come into His presence with thanksgiving. He entreats us, that if today is the day we hear God's voice, we will not harden our hearts. We are reminded of the Israelites when they grumbled against God in the desert, even though God had performed great works among them and took care of their needs. Let us not approach God complaining about what we do not have, but rather let us be thankful for what He has provided for us. Let us not have our mind set on what we want [hardened hearts], but rather have the mindset of doing what God wants [open hearts].

In our prayer, do we spend a lot of time telling God what we want? God already knows what we want and what we need. In the Our Father, we ask God to take care of our daily needs. That is sufficient. What is important here is that Jesus wants to have a relationship with us! Are we open to it? Are there obstacles in the way which need to be cleared?

St. Thérèse said that her prayer was an upward gaze toward heaven.* Prayer does not require words. It can be a disposition of the heart towards God. We can offer our work, our joy, our suffering, as prayer. One or two heartfelt words can mean much more than repeating rote prayers without much thought. Relationships require attention. Sometimes the relationship may feel barren, like winter. At other times, we may feel exuberant, like the springtime! Our prayer life reflects the season of our faith life. We continue on in the winter, knowing that there are buds under the snow that are waiting to blossom. Our prayer life goes through different stages in which we develop our conversational skills with God, which includes listening.

If we are open to God's Word, if we come into His presence with gratefulness, we will indeed hear Him and allow His Word to become part of us. Then we can develop our relationship with Him and He can work in us and through us in our relationships with others.

Action:

- *Jesus tells us that if two of us agree about anything for which we are to pray, God will grant it! Let us ask others to pray with us for any specific intention. Let us rejoice together when God answers our prayer!*
- *Explore new avenues of prayer this month. At the end of the month, determine what kind of prayer works best for you.*
- *Attend the St. Thérèse novena, at SJB every evening at 6:30 p.m., from Sept. 23 through October 1st.*
- *Reflect on what you are grateful for. Thank God!*
- *There are many opportunities for prayer. Consult the bulletin and the NWI Catholic paper.*

**“For me, prayer is a surge of the heart; it is a simple look turned toward heaven, it is a cry of recognition and of love, embracing both trial and joy.” ~ St. Thérèse of Lisieux*

“True prayer is nothing but love” ~ St. Augustine

“Prayer is the inner bath of love into which the soul plunges itself.” ~ St. John Vianney

“Everyone of us needs half an hour of prayer each day, except when we are busy – then we need an hour.” ~ St. Francis de Sales

“Prayer is the raising of one’s mind and heart to God or the requesting of good things from God.” ~ St. John Damascene

Types of Prayer

- adoration: we glorify our Creator, and adore God from whom all blessings flow.
- intercession: the prayer that we make on behalf of the needs of others.
- petition: this type of prayer acknowledges how much we depend on God for our needs, including forgiveness, and persistence in seeking Him. “Ask and you shall receive...” (Mt. 7:7) “The first movement of the prayer of petition is asking for forgiveness of our sins.”(p. 468)**
- praise: “the form of prayer that recognizes that God is God” (CCC, no. 2639)
- thanksgiving: This form of prayer flows from the Church’s greatest prayer, the celebration of the Eucharist.

**Act of Contrition – prayer in which we express sorrow for sin with a firm purpose of amendment, which is the intention to avoid sin in the future. It is a necessary part of the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

The Five Finger Prayer Luke 11:5-12 and Luke 18:1-5 (Intercessory)

Our responsibility is to ask. Be assured, God listens.

As you love to hear from your loved ones, God loves to hear from us.

Prayer = an ongoing dialogue with God.

- 1) *Thumb* - Pray for those nearest you such as your spouse, children, siblings, family, friends and co-workers.
- 2) *Pointing Finger* - Pray for those who instruct, heal and minister such as teachers, health care professionals, pastors and church workers.
- 3) *Middle/Highest Finger* - Pray for leaders in business, police and fire departments, military personnel, and local, state and federal government including the judiciary.
- 4) *Fourth/Weakest Finger* - Pray for those sick and in need, locally, nationally and internationally including the persecuted church and those who have suffered natural and man-made disasters.
- 5) *Fifth/Smallest Finger* - Pray for your needs.

Devotional prayer: includes the Rosary; Stations of the Cross; litanies; pilgrimages to shrines in the Holy Land and Rome, Marian shrines, and those dedicated to saints.

Meditation: Prayer in which, in order to respond to the Lord, one tries to understand more fully or deeply God’s Revelation of the truths of the faith.

Contemplation: Wordless prayer in which a person focuses the whole person in loving adoration on God and his very presence.

Source: U. S. Catholic Catechism for Adults, USCCB, Washington, D.C., 2006.

Daily Mass readings:

<http://www.usccb.org/nab/> <http://www.dailyscripture.net/>

<http://www.ewtn.com/Devotionals/inspiration.htm>