

## 17<sup>th</sup> Sunday (C)

- Over the Church's history tens of thousands of books have been written on prayer – books on various forms & ways of praying.
- For Christians, faith is not about some code of ethics for life, it's not about doctrines or church laws, so much as about relationship with God.
- As a human person, Jesus shows us in his way of living life & in his communication with his Father what it means to be in good relationship with God - A profound newness that Jesus brings to relationship with God is that he invites us into the same level of closeness that he has with God – that of an intimate bond of love; Jesus invites us to address this God as Father; not as a distant, almighty God who is aloof from us, but one who really does care about us – who has compassion for us & nourishes us.
- Prayer is often referred to as the breathing of the soul – it is a breathing with God's breath; this breath is the very presence of the Holy Spirit – the very presence of God in us enabling us to be encountered by God.
- Prayer not only unites us to God, but if it is genuine, it **must** unite us as family, parish, church & world, to one another.
- Prayer requires a humility in acknowledging that we are beholden to a God who loves & cares for us & who keeps us in being.
- The discipline of prayer also involves a necessity of listening.
- Though we have formal words of prayer & the words we pray whenever we are together in liturgies, if prayer is about communication, it is also about our listening to what God says to us - & God **does** speak – so we need to learn the art of hearing what God communicates.
- We miss God if we're not attuned to his presence in our daily lives, because it is not just about meeting him when we turn on the communication by our praying - if we don't make time to know him in prayer, we won't recognise him in the ordinary circumstances of our lives.
- The Our Father is a prayer of love; it begins with the love God has for us, tells us to continue to ask for & expect this love from God, even in the nitty-gritty of daily life &, it ends with us asking God to protect us from everything that tempts us to think we can do without God.
- The benefit of authentic prayer is in the change that it effects in us, not in God; Prayer is intended to transform us, not to sway God, so authentic prayer enables us to become more loving, compassionate, forgiving & more outreaching to others – we grow in the image of our creator & can live life more deeply.
- So when we ask God to forgive us, we necessarily ask that we might become better forgivers, both of ourselves & others; & when we ask that God provide for our daily needs, we necessarily pray that we might become better providers for the needs of others.
- So be careful what you pray because you might just get what you ask for.