

Week Two – Old Testament Models of Prayer

“Everyone Prays” – The Universal Call to Prayer

“Even after losing through sin his likeness to God, man remains an image of his Creator, and retains the desire for the one who calls him into existence. All religions bear witness to men’s essential search for God (cf. Acts 17:27).” (CCC 2566)

*Attending to our next breath as a gift is to be re-anchored in praying, relating to God!

The Revelation of Prayer in the Old Testament

“In his indefectible covenant with every living creature, God has always called people to prayer. But it is above all beginning with our father Abraham that prayer is revealed in the Old Testament.” (CCC 2569)

*The grace of the Bible Timeline and the Bible in a year podcast – not feeling intimidated by the Old Testament as an integral part of God’s living Word by which He speaks to us in the present.

Abraham: God’s Promise and the Prayer of Faith

- A *heart entirely submissive* to what the Lord tells him that leads to *obedience* (Genesis 12:4)
- A prayer first expressed in deeds, only later does Abraham’s first prayer in words appear: a *veiled complaint* reminding God of His promises which seem unfulfilled (Genesis 15:2)
- Learning to walk in God’s Presence leads to *hospitality*: readiness to welcome God’s mysterious comings (Genesis 18:1-15)
- *Daring, confident intercession* from his experience of God’s compassion (Genesis 18:16-33)
- *Sacrificial offering* that reflects a heart conformed to God’s heart (Genesis 22:1-19)

Jacob: Wrestling with God

“God renews his promise to Jacob, the ancestor of the twelve tribes of Israel. Before confronting his elder brother Esau, Jacob wrestles all night with a mysterious figure who refuses to reveal his name, but who blesses him before leaving him at dawn (cf. Genesis 32:23-33). From this account, the spiritual tradition of the Church has retained the symbol *of prayer as a battle of faith and as the triumph of perseverance*.” (CCC 2573)

Moses: The Prayer of the Mediator

- *The humanity of Moses and God’s persistence and patience*: “Here again the initiative is God’s. From the midst of the burning bush he calls Moses. This event will remain one of the primordial images of prayer in the spiritual tradition of Jews and Christians alike...There is something of a divine plea in this mission, and only after long debate does Moses attune his

own will to that of the Savior God. But in the dialogue in which God confides in him, **Moses also learns how to pray: he balks, makes excuses, above all questions:** and it is in response to his question that the Lord confides his ineffable name, which will be revealed through his mighty deeds.” (CCC 2575)

- **Intimacy with God:** “Thus the Lord used to speak to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend” (Exodus 33:11).
- From intimacy with God to **faithfulness in mission:** “Moses prayer is characteristic of contemplative prayer by which God’s servant remains faithful to his mission...Moses drew strength and determination for his intercession.” (CCC 2576 & 2577)
- “Moses was very **humble**, more so than anyone else on the face of the earth” (Num. 12:3).

David and the People of God

“David is par excellence the king ‘after God’s own heart,’ the shepherd who prays for his people and prays in their name. His **submission to the will of God**, his **praise**, and his **repentance**, will be a model for the prayer of the people.” (CCC 2579)

Elijah and the Prophets

- His **plea to the living God** on Mount Carmel (1 Kings 18:20-40)
- The **light whisper** of God’s voice (1 Kings 19:9-18)
“Without noise, postmodern man falls into a dull, insistent uneasiness. He is accustomed to permanent background noise, which sickens yet reassures him. Without noise, man is feverish, lost. Noise gives him security, like a drug on which he has become dependent. With its festive appearance, noise is a whirlwind that avoids facing itself...it is a dangerous, deceptive medicine...” (Robert Sarah)

The Psalms

- A gymnasium for the soul (exercising the heart to the full in trust)
- Praying with the very words inspired by God
- Personal and communal; memory and expectation
- Sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving

Practical Points for Praying this Coming Week

*Stop – Look – Listen

**Praise – Reflect or Repent – Ask – Yield