

Week Three - Jesus, The Master of Prayer

Luke 5:15-16: "...the report went about concerning him; and great multitudes gathered to hear and to be healed of their infirmities. *But he withdrew to the wilderness and prayed.*"

Luke 18:1-8: "And Jesus told them a parable to the effect *that they ought always to pray and not lose heart...*"

Jesus Fully Reveals to us How to Pray

"The drama of prayer is fully revealed to us in the Word who became flesh and dwells among us. To seek to understand his prayer...is to approach the holy Lord Jesus as Moses approached the burning bush: first to contemplate him in prayer, then to hear how he teaches us to pray, in order to know how he hears our prayer." (CCC 2598)

Jesus Prays

- Jesus learns to pray according to his human heart from his mother and in the words and rhythms of the prayer of the Jewish people...but His prayer springs from an otherwise secret source.
- Jesus introduces a unique newness to prayer: it is "filial prayer, which the Father awaits from his children
- The Gospel of Luke is the "Gospel of Prayer" as it gives special emphasis to the action of the Holy Spirit and the meaning of prayer in Christ's ministry: He often prays in solitude and at night, He prays before every decisive moment of his life and mission and that relating to His apostles, and he even is praying before teaching them how to pray.
- The evangelists have preserved two more explicit prayers offered by Christ during his public ministry: "Yes, Father!..." (Matthew 11:25-30) and "Father, I thank you for you have heard me..." (John 11:41-42)

*The Priestly Prayer and his praying on the Cross we will save until the last evening.

"Prayer enables the incarnate Word to remain with the Father, to be turned continually toward Him and wholly gathered in His bosom. Although he came to dwell in our midst, Jesus never distanced himself from his Father in prayer. Inasmuch as his prayer was a continual act of filial obedience - *'not my will, but Yours be done'* (Lk 22:42) - it is also the basis of His mission...By his prayer, Jesus shows that He did not merely preach and practice an ethical or social gospel, but also lived an intense spiritual life. Indeed, this rooting in the Father's heart was the source of His apostolic dynamism. This is one of the aspects that Christian pastoral ministry most has to recover today."

Jesus Teaches us How to Pray

- "The Lord's Prayer is truly the summary of the whole Gospel." (CCC 2761)

- Jesus taught them to pray to the Father using the word Abba, which in the language of his day was used by children to speak to their fathers.
- He wants us to trust unconditionally in the loving care of the Father, even in the darkest trial (Sermon on the Mount and by example in the garden of Gethsemane).
- There are five dimensions of prayer given us by Jesus:
 1. Conversion of heart
 2. Prayer in faith
 3. Boldness
 4. Vigilance
 5. To ask In His Holy Name
- Three principle parables on prayer transmitted to us by Saint Luke:
 1. The importunate friend - “Knock, at it will be opened to you” (urgency in praying)
 2. The importunate widow - “When the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?” (patience and persistence in praying)
 3. The Pharisee and the tax collector - “be merciful to me a sinner” (humility in praying)

Jesus Hears Our Prayer

- Jesus Christ also answers prayers addressed to Him. His entire healing ministry is ample evidence of that. This is particularly so when the prayer is offered in faith: “Your faith has made you well, go in peace.” (CCC 2616)
- Jesus hears our prayers in words (the leper, Jairus, the Canaanite woman, the good thief, etc...) or in silence (the bearers of the paralytic, the woman with a hemorrhage who touches his clothes, the tears and ointment of the sinful woman, etc...)
- The Jesus Prayer: “Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner!” (Cf. Mt 9:27; Mk 10:8)

“Jesus prays for us as our priest, prays in us as our Head, and is prayed to by us as our God. Therefore, let us acknowledge our voice in him and his in us.” (Saint Augustine)

The Prayer of the Virgin Mary

1. Mary’s “yes” (fiat) at the Annunciation - openness, availability, trust
2. Mary’s intercessory prayer at the wedding feast of Cana - “do whatever He tells you...”
3. Mary’s great prayer of praise and gratitude - the Magnificat: “My soul magnifies the Lord’ (Lk 1:46). In these words, she expresses her whole program of life: not setting herself at the center, but leaving space for God...”

Practical Point for Praying this Week

*Devote your prayer this week to the prayers of Jesus and to His parables about praying