

Sunday 27th July 2025

The Sixth Sunday after Trinity

Gospel Reading

Luke 11.1-13

The Lord's Prayer

11 He was praying in a certain place, and after he had finished, one of his disciples said to him, 'Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples.' ² He said to them, 'When you pray, say:

Father, hallowed be your name.

Your kingdom come.

³ Give us each day our daily bread.

⁴ And forgive us our sins,
for we ourselves forgive everyone indebted to us.
And do not bring us to the time of trial.'

Perseverance in Prayer

⁵ And he said to them, 'Suppose one of you has a friend, and you go to him at midnight and say to him, "Friend, lend me three loaves of bread; ⁶ for a friend of mine has arrived, and I have nothing to set before him." ⁷ And he answers from within, "Do not bother me; the door has already been locked, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot get up and give you anything." ⁸ I tell you, even though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, at least because of his persistence he will get up and give him whatever he needs.

⁹ 'So I say to you, Ask, and it will be given to you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you. ¹⁰ For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened. ¹¹ Is there anyone among you who, if your child asks for a fish, will give a snake instead of a fish? ¹² Or if the child asks for an egg, will give a scorpion? ¹³ If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!'

Other Readings: Hosea 1.2-10 Psalm 85 Colossians 2.6-15[16-19]

Homily

What's the latest you would happily knock on the door of a friendly neighbour to ask a favour of them? It probably depends on how well you get on with them and how pressing the need is, but to do so at midnight would seem totally unreasonable. Yet that was the illustration Jesus used as he taught his disciples about prayer. As the Gospels tell us he did so often, Jesus used a ridiculously extreme story to make his point in a compelling and memorable way.

In the story Jesus told, the householder at first refused to answer the door to his friend who had come asking for bread. He was already in bed along with the rest of his family. But, Jesus said, if the friend kept calling out, eventually the householder would come to the door and give the friend whatever he needed. But note exactly what Jesus said. The friend would be given whatever he needed, which is very different from being given whatever he wanted.

The teaching point Jesus was making to his disciples and to us is that, if we are diligent in our prayers, if we are persistent in offering them in faith, then God will give us what we need. Even in the midnight of the darkest times in our lives, when we're alone, in need and feeling vulnerable, God does hear our prayers and responds to our needs.

In Matthew's Gospel, Jesus tells his disciples "Ask, and it will be given to you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you." That, though, must be set within the context of God's overwhelming love for us, his children.

Any loving parent will want the best for their children, but if a child asks for something that would, in some way, be harmful, or not in the child's best interests, or simply unaffordable, out of love the parent will have to say "no" to what the child wants and focus on responding to their real needs.

God, as our Father, similarly wants the best for us, his children, and, in his economy, nothing is unaffordable, even to the cost of his own Son's life. As our perfectly loving Father, God looks to meet us in our real needs rather than our self-centred "wants". And the truth of that is proven by the way he has already responded to our greatest need. As Paul wrote to the Colossians, in baptism we have been raised with Christ to new life and the sins that separated us from God have been set aside by being nailed to the cross.

So, God has responded to our greatest need, our need for salvation, by offering his own Son on the cross, raising him to new life, and restoring us to God.

But what about our other needs, such as for peace, justice, an end to poverty, etc.? Let's go back and look at the start of our Gospel reading and the Lord's Prayer - the model prayer that Jesus gave his disciples when they asked him to teach them to pray. Luke misses out a few of the lines that are familiar to us from the fuller version given in Matthew's Gospel. It starts, "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven."

God reigns in holiness in heaven, where nothing opposes his will and all is perfect. But that's not the case here on earth, where there is sin and corruption that run against God's will. There is good in the world, but there is also much that is wrong, or even evil. War, oppression, victimisation, crime, failure to share earth's resources, greed, inadequate health care, malnutrition, and much more. All these are the results of how we and our fellow humans live our lives.

So we, as faithful children of God pray, "Your kingdom come. Your will be done." And we pray that prayer in order that we may be emboldened and strengthened in doing whatever we can to help bring God's kingdom, his reign, to every aspect of life here on earth. We pray that prayer in order that we may more fully put our faith into action by being agents of God's will.

"Your kingdom come. Your will be done." Strengthen us, O Lord, in your service, as we seek to do your will, and thus bring your kingdom that bit closer, here on earth. Amen.

Conversation Questions

1. *In what ways do you put your faith into action on weekdays?*
2. *What can we do to bring God's kingdom closer here in our parish?*
3. *Is there anything else from the passage not already discussed that speaks to you? What is it?*
4. *What will you do this week in your Monday-to-Saturday ministry in response to what you have heard today? #everydayfaith*

Prayer

Spend some time in prayer, responding to what you have heard today and listening to what God might be saying to you.

Collect of the day

*Merciful God,
you have prepared for those who love you
such good things as pass our understanding:
pour into our hearts such love toward you
that we, loving you in all things and above all things,
may obtain your promises,
which exceed all that we can desire;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.*

(or)

*Creator God,
you made us all in your image:
may we discern you in all that we see,
and serve you in all that we do;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

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