

Tuesday of the First Week of Lent

Gospel text (Mt 6:7-15): Jesus said to his disciples: “In praying, do not babble like the pagans, who think that they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them. Your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

This is how you are to pray: Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy Kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

If you forgive men their transgressions, your heavenly Father will forgive you. But if you do not forgive men, neither will your Father forgive your transgressions.”

“In praying, do not babble; your Father knows what you need”

Fr. Joaquim FAINÉ i Miralpech
(Tarragona, Spain)

Today, Jesus —the Son of God— teaches us how to behave like a son of God. The first aspect is our trust and the confidence we should have when we talk to Him. But our Lord warns us: “In praying, do not babble” (Mt 6:7). When children talk to their parents, they do not resort to complicated reasoning, nor to using a lot of words, but they simply ask for what they need. We should always know God will listen to us because God —who is also the Father— loves us and listens to us. In fact, to pray is not so much to inform God, but to ask Him for all we need, as “Your Father knows what you need even before you ask Him” (Mt 6:8). We will not be good Christians if we do not pray, as a son cannot be a good son if he does not talk to his parents.

The Lord's Prayer is the prayer that Jesus Himself taught us, and it is just a

compendium of our Christian life. Each time we say the Lord's Prayer we let the Father take us by the hand and we ask Him what we need every day to become better sons of God. We need not only the material bread, but —more than that— the Celestial Bread: “Let us beg that we never lack the Eucharist bread”. We need also to learn to forgive and to be forgiven: “To be able to receive the forgiveness God offers us, let us address ourselves to the Father who loves us”, as it is said in the Mass in the preliminary introduction to our Lord's Prayer.

During Lent, the Church is asking us to go deeper into our prayers. Saint John Chrysostom says: “The prayer, our conversation with God, is our best treasure, because it means... being united to him.” Oh Lord! I need to learn how to pray and how to draw specific benefits for my own life. Mostly to live the virtue of charity: the prayer gives me strength to live it better every day. And this is why I ask Him daily to help me to forgive not only the small troubles I may have to face from others but, also, the offensive words and attitudes and, more than that, to bear no malice to my fellow men, so that I can sincerely tell them I have forgiven from the bottom of my heart those who are in debt to me. I will be able to achieve it because God's Mother will help me at all times.

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

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“For what can be a more spiritual prayer than that which was given to us by Christ, by whom also the Holy Spirit was given to us? What praying to the Father can be more truthful than that which was delivered to us by the Son who is the Truth?.” (Saint Cyprian)

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“The Our Father begins with a great consolation: we are allowed to say “Father” because the Son was our brother and has revealed the Father to us; because, thanks to what Christ has done, we have once more become children of God.” (Benedict XVI)

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“We can invoke God as "Father" because he is revealed to us by his Son become man and because his Spirit makes him known to us. The personal relation of the Son to the Father is something that man cannot conceive of nor the angelic powers even dimly see: and yet, the Spirit of the Son grants a participation in that very relation to us who believe that Jesus is the Christ and that we are born of God.” (Catechism Of The Catholic Church, N° 2780)

