

Seventeenth Sunday of the Year – July 28, 2019

Genesis 18: 20-31 Colossians 2: 2-14 Luke 11: 1-13

We are traveling along this journey of Jesus that St. Luke uses to describe for us what it means to take up the cross and follow Jesus. Thus far we have heard that we need to be fully committed to this way of guiding our lives, that the love of God is shown by our love of neighbor, that we are actively to serve others, and that we are also to listen to God who us a source of peace and a relief from anxiety.

Now, at another point in this journey, Jesus pauses and goes off by himself to pray. As a result, his followers ask him to instruct them on how to pray. Many thoughts are offered to us today about prayer, about this dialogue with God. There is, for example, the familiarity heard in the bargaining between Abraham and God. This give an insight into the intimacy of the relationship with God. The story also tells us that the justice of God is not automatic. There are no rigid sentencing guidelines that God follows. The justice of God is tempered with mercy which is seen as possible in the search for just individuals by Abraham in the account.

The thoughts Saint Pail presented to us today remind us that through the action of one person, Jesus Christ restored, by his death and resurrection, the relationship with God that had been harmed, or even destroyed, by sin. We have been reconciled with God, the source of love.



Most central to our thoughts today is how Jesus teaches us to dialogue with God. We hear Luke's version of what we know as "The Lord's Prayer." We are more familiar with St. Matthew's account. What Jesus gives is an outline of what we are to seek in prayer. Christ assures us

that if we truly ask in prayer what he tells us, we will receive it. This is not same as suggesting that we will get anything we want.

We need to consider what the Lord's prayer teaches us that we are to ask., what we are willing to commit ourselves to as followers of Jesus. We pray that God's name be holy -that it be holy in us. We pray that God's way of life rule and guide us – that God's kingdom be evident in us. We pray that God truly be with us – nourishing and sustaining us in ways that are far more significant than mere material and passing things. We pray that God forgive us in the manner that we forgive others – perhaps the greatest challenge of this prayer. All of our prayers, all about which we dialogue with God, is to be guided by this framework.

Prayer to God is not magic. Like human dialogue, it seeks to reveal ourselves to the other, in this, to God. It is a loving dialogue of parent and child. At times it is bold, as in the case of Abraham. It is intimate at other times, as Jesus teaches us. Our prayer is to be based on a relationship which is constantly deepening, growing, richer and fuller. It is to grow in such a way that we continually reveal our confidence

and trust in our good and gracious God.