

My dear people of God, today's first reading and the Gospel teach us **to pray with perseverance**. Abraham demonstrates a real persistence in his prayer of intercession over the fate of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen.18:23-32). Jesus teaches us to pray and invites us to be persistence in our prayers as well, by telling us to "ask... seek... knock" (Lk.11:9). Prayer deepens our relationship with God. Consequently, the quality of our prayer is corresponding to the value we place on our relationship with God. Over the value of what was to be delivered, **Abraham took God seriously that he was able to intercede for people of Sodom and Gomorrah.**

In the first reading, we notice that Abraham has received the lost privilege of Adam and Eve, by walking with God and standing before the Lord (Gen.18:16; 22). As Abraham had the privilege to **walk and stand before the Lord**, he intercedes for the sinful people of Sodom and Gomorrah. Abraham respectfully seeks to intercede through questions: "will you sweep away the innocent with the guilty? Suppose there were fifty innocent people in the city..." Abraham pleaded from fifty to ten innocent people in Sodom and Gomorrah, but God assured him, if he finds ten innocent people in the cities, he will not destroy them (Gen.18:32). God spoke to Abraham with patience and love as a father speaks to his son.

In our Gospel today, we heard that *Jesus was in a certain place praying and his disciples asked him to teach them how to pray. Jesus taught them the famous "Our Father" prayer (Lk.11:1ff). According to Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC) No.2774, the Lord's prayer is truly the summary of the whole Gospel and the most perfect prayer. It is called the Lord's prayer because it comes to us through our Lord Jesus, the master and model of our prayer. Two wonderful things are going on here. Firstly, we are praying in the words Jesus himself taught us to pray and secondly, we discover that we are praying with him.* In other words, Our Father **prayer helps us to have a relationship of love and intimacy with God**, Jesus uses the **imagery of father** here in order to correct the dominant image of God as the king or boss who is to be feared rather than to be loved.

When speaking of prayer as a father-child affair finally reminds us that prayer is an activity that flows out of a relationship. At all times, we do not learn how to pray properly; we become better women and men of prayer when **our relationship with God becomes more intimate like that of father and child**. If we want to improve our prayer life, we should focus on improving our personal relationship with God, our Father. Moreover, we should also not forget that other side of prayer, that is our side. **God does not answer prayer in accordance, with our standard or what we want**. Let us bear in our minds that God is not at our disposal. We give Him freedom to answer 'yes' or 'no' or 'wait'. That is why Jesus tells us to "**ask and you will receive; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you**" (Lk.11:9). In prayer, we do not expect God to answer us in the way we want but in the way God wants, because He knows what is best for us. Hence the saying: "**Man proposes, but God disposes.**"

Finally, dear friends, Our Father Prayer can be summed up with the acronym ACTS: namely; Adoration, Contrition, Thanksgiving and Supplication. Our Father prayer has been placed within all the major prayers of the church; namely: Mass, communion service, Liturgy of the Hours... I just want to draw your attention that the Mass we celebrate is the highest prayer of the church. It is not ordinary prayer but **the heart and the summit of all prayers**, confer CCC. No. 1407. To turn Sunday Mass into something that is only optional is to tell God that "I am self-sufficient". Jesus **spent time in prayer**; time when he ceased entirely doing other things and gave himself wholly to communion with his Father. We often convince ourselves that there is no time in our busy lives for this kind of prayer, and we are tempted to excuse ourselves with 'everything I do is a prayer' or 'I pray while driving the car or doing the garden. Let us spend some of our time with our **Lord to renew our strength, because they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength...** Amen!