

Notes - Prayer: a cry of the heart that pierces the clouds of Heaven

A character of the Gospel that can help us to understand what prayer is and with which spirit to pray is undoubtedly the blind man of Jericho. We know his story: he lived on the side of the road, immersed in darkness and wrapped in the cloak of great suffering. Forced to beg for some compassion from men, he waited confidently for the God of light to open his eyes one day. This man had heard of Jesus and had a great faith in him in his heart. So he was burning with the desire to meet him because he was sure that from that meeting his life would have changed. He did not know how, but he knew that this would have happened.

And so, as soon as he heard that Jesus was passing by, he cried out with all his strength: "Jesus, son of David, have mercy on me, help me: succour me, I believe in you, in your omnipotence, in your love!"

Here is what prayer is: a cry of the heart that pierces the clouds of Heaven and goes straight to the heart of Christ, shakes and moves it to compassion so that He may intervene and heal human existence. Prayer - if done with faith - has this power: the earth cries and the foundations of Heaven shake, as if there were an earthquake in it.

Prayer is getting out of oneself to be immersed in God

It is right to stress strongly that prayer is

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not a staying in oneself, in one's own wretched world made of crumbly clay and pure immanence. It is a way out of oneself to immerse oneself in God who is other than us, he is the divine and omnipotent Person, Creator and Redeemer of man. Prayer is the elevation of the believer that opens himself to transcendence, to perfect communion with the One that knows how to console, renew and regenerate man in the depths of his being.

Praying does not mean pronouncing abstract formulas, empty words that die on earth. Praying is meeting the Almighty and knocking with confidence at the gates of his heart so that He may come to our aid and change our existence.

Praying is meeting the Almighty and knocking with confidence at the doors of his heart

The before and after the prayer cannot be the same. That is how it was for the blind man of Jericho. So it must be for each of us. That man, from a blind person became one that sees, from a relegated to the side of the road became the protagonist of the history of salvation.

We too, like him, cannot remain what we are if we truly meet Jesus, if we experience deep inside his delicate, efficacious and reassuring presence. Everything in us must change: thoughts, desires, feelings, attitudes, words, works, ways of seeing and interpreting history. All our being - spirit, soul and body - must be invested by grace and be transformed, christified and deified.

We are all called to learn the truth of prayer, so that each of us will rise up in God and become "the light of the world and salt of the earth", according to the heart of Christ and of the Virgin Mary, our heavenly Mother.

Sac. Lucio Bellantoni



This is my blood of the covenant

The covenant is a pact between God and man, in which both undertake to observe the given word. Without a word given and accepted, there is no alliance. God and man compel themselves to obey forever, without ever failing, to every word they manifest and on the foundation of which they are allied. What is God obliged to do and what are his people obliged to do in the Old Covenant? God obliges himself to be life, protection, custody, defence, blessing and prosperity for his people, freeing them from their enemies and not allowing the earth given to them to be taken from them. The people are obliged to observe all the commands given by their Lord, to listen to his voice, to walk on the path indicated by him in the Law, without deviating either to the right or to the left. The pact is sealed with the blood ritual. Some animals are killed, their blood is collected in basins. First half of it is poured on the altar of the Lord, a sign of his presence, and with the remaining one the people are sprinkled, meaning that from this moment they are animated by a single life. God is the life of his people. His people manifest the life of God to the world. All this can happen if the people remain faithful to the given word.

Everything changes in the new alliance. The Word to be observed is that of Jesus, given in the Sermon on the Mount and in every teaching of the Gospel. The blood and also the body are those of Christ. Body and blood must be eaten and drunk. By now the life of God, which is all in Christ Jesus, wants to live in us and for us to pro-

duce every fruit of good in obedience to his Gospel. Body and blood are given to live the Gospel in Christ and for Christ. One lives for Christ if he lives in Christ and with Christ. One lives in Christ and with Christ, if he lives in his body which is the Church, but not in an invisible, but together in a visible and invisible form. The visible belonging to the body of Christ is essential to be able to make the covenant. The blood is that of Christ. The body is also that of Christ. We receive baptism, we become the body of Christ, we eat the body of Christ, we drink his blood, we become one in him, we can live for Christ, because we live in Christ and with Christ. Without life in Christ, with Christ, there might never be life for Christ. If one is in Christ, he is in God.

But Christ has also committed himself. Not only to give us his body and his blood in order to obey his every command, to listen to his Word, to follow in the Church and under her discernment, the motion of the Holy Spirit, but also to give us the eternal kingdom of the Father and the Spirit without measure. To bestow us every gift of grace, truth, justice and peace, so that we can bear witness to him in time, so that tomorrow he can give us the blessed eternity. We know that Jesus is very faithful to his every promise. Today and always, it is up to man to be very faithful to the word given in every sacrament and even before that when he has become a believer. Mother of God, help us to respond to the fidelity of Jesus with our fidelity, as great as his.

Father Costantino Di Bruno

LIVING HOLINESS IN THE TRUTH OF CHRIST THE LORD

The 2nd chapter of the Apostolic Exhortation "Gaudete et Exsultate" of H.H. Francis

Iwould like to draw attention on two falsifications of sanctity that could make us go wrong: Gnosticism and Pelagianism. They are two heresies born in the early Christian centuries, but which continue to have an alarming actuality. Even today the hearts of many Christians, perhaps without being aware of it, allow themselves to be seduced by these deceptive proposals. In them there is an anthropocentric immanentism disguised as Catholic truth" (GE 35).

It is necessary to make an honest observation: the man of today has abolished from his heart the Word of Christ the Lord. He has forgotten it. When the Word of Christ is forgotten, eternal salvation becomes unattainable. One is in physical and spiritual death. When Christ is driven out of the heart of man we are in bewilderment, in falsehood, in idolatry and in sin. Silencing this truth means condemning every man. Even the Christian forgets this truth. Having Christ as the foundation of life means repudiating every form of sin and remaining obedient to his Word, as He has been obedient to the Father's Will. There cannot be a Christianity lived without obedience to the Word. "If you love me, you will keep my commandments" (Jn 14, 15).

By no longer believing in this truth, one is convinced that in order to reach salvation, the observance of the Word is not necessary. We do not recognize the Gospel as the way of salvation because we do not recognize Christ as Saviour. Not living in Christ, one does not even listen to the Holy Spirit. Without the Holy Spirit one is not able to recognize the Father's Will and live

it. We are not simply saints. From non-holiness all falsehood is proclaimed as truth. One is in the darkness of conscience. When the Christian is reduced to living this condition of spiritual falsehood, it is then that man can no longer reach Christ. "For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead" (Jas 2, 26). However, the works to be done are those of the Father's Will which is given to us by His Son.

The belief that to live by faith is enough to behave well and that this good coincides with the personal conscience is insipient. Conscience, in order to be light to life, must be illuminated by the Spirit, formed by the Word and capable of discerning Good from Evil according to Truth. By no longer distinguishing Good from Evil, one comes to the conclusion that everything is lawful. Personal responsibility and conscience are delegitimized. Sin is justified. We claim to be safe without merit, to be declared righteous from injustice, saints from sin. and saved from damnation. «Not everyone that says to me: Lord, Lord! will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven" (Mt 7:21). "May the Lord free the Church from the new forms of Gnosticism and Pelagianism that complicate and stop her on her path to holiness! These deviations are expressed in different forms, according to the personal temperament and characteristics. This is why I exhort everyone to ask and discern before God how they can be made manifest in his life" (GE, 62).

Father Diego Menniti

The
Lord's Day
ROMAN RITE

HE TOOK A CUP, GAVE THANKS
(HOLY BODY AND BLOOD OF CHRIST - YEAR B)

THIS IS THE BLOOD OF THE COVENANT (Ex 24.3-8)

By pouring blood on the altar and sprinkling the people, it is meant that from this moment on God and his people are one life, not two. They are one inseparable life. The law given and observed is the way through which the one life might be lived. Whoever comes out of the commandments, not only destroys for himself, but also for the people the one life. The covenant is not stipulated between the individual and the Lord, but between the people and the Lord. By now the individual must always think of himself as an essential part of the people of God. His exit from the alliance causes ruin for the whole community. No transgression of the Law stops at the person that transgresses; for it transgression affects all the people of the Lord. Aronne does not watch and does not comply with the law. All the people become idolatrous. David sins of adultery. He causes an internal war in his kingdom. Solomon becomes idolatrous, the kingdom is ruined, torn without any remedy forever.

BUT WITH HIS OWN BLOOD (Heb 9.11-15)

In the Old Covenant the atonement of sins occurred with the offering to the Lord of the blood of bulls and bullocks. Blood, in repentance and willingness of conversion, was aimed at the remission of a sin committed. The man was forgiven, but he remained in his old nature. On the contrary, the expiation offered by Christ to the Father is different. The blood of Christ has so much power of salvation as to operate the regeneration of the nature of every man. For it we are not only redeemed, but also justified, regenerated, sanctified, made to share of divine na-

ture and transformed into spiritual creatures. We are also filled with the Holy Spirit and moved by Him from truth to truth and from faith to faith. The fruits produced by the offering of the blood of Christ are eternal and universal. Offering his blood once and for all, Christ Jesus has abolished all the ancient sacrifices. All the sins of the world have been washed and purified. His redemption is perfect.

TAKE IT; THIS IS MY BODY (Mk 14,12.16.22-26)

In the Old Covenant the blood of the bulls and the bullocks was sprinkled on the people. In the New Covenant the blood of Christ is drunk. By reason of the law of the hypostatic union, by drinking the blood of Christ the Lord, one receives all of Christ in his soul and divinity, the whole Father and the Holy Spirit, the whole Church that is his body, but also all of humanity assumed by Him for its redemption and salvation. Whoever eats the body of Christ and drinks his blood must be in the world life of the Father and manifest all his love; the life of the Son and work with his grace and truth and life of the Holy Spirit, becoming a true creator of communion between God and men and among men and men. He must have in his heart the same desire of Christ and make of his life a perfect sacrifice to the Lord for the redemption and salvation of his brothers. Who drinks the blood and eats the flesh of Christ, must be the life of Jesus in the world, in the midst of his brothers. The Eucharist offered and received obliges us to fulfil the evangelizing mission to bring the salvation of Christ to every heart.

by the theologian

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