

Thursday, Eleventh Week in Ordinary Time

Matthew 6:7-15

PRAYER OF PETITION



This is probably the best -known passage of the Gospel - the Our Father, the prayer that Jesus taught us. In this passage Jesus declares that God knows what we need even before we begin our prayer.

If such is the case we can raise a number of searching questions as to how we need to approach the prayer of petition. How often do we tend to present our prayer of petition as if we were set to a time of prayer in order to give information to God? Jesus spells out in this passage that God does have the information already. We do not get to prayer to bring anything to God's attention. God is already aware. The prayer of petition is not primarily for the sake of God but for our sakes. To petition God changes us not God. When we make a prayer of petition, deep down ourselves, we should be open to change and allow God to impact on us. Jesus teaches us how to petition God in a way that helps to make us the kind of person that God desires us to be. We are to be the people who are ready to do God's will and not the kind of people who are driven by what we want or desire. In this prayer we give greater priority to the coming of God's kingdom than to the promotion and safeguard our little area of control. When we pray, we do it from the standpoint of belonging to a community. The following points come out strongly from the prayer that Jesus teaches us.

- The emphasis of our prayer is ‘we’ and ‘us’ rather than on ‘I’ and ‘my’.
- We are to be people who acknowledge our dependence on God for all that is vital in our lives, our daily bread.
- We are to be people who are always aware of our need for God’s mercy and who stand ready to give to others the mercy we have received from God.
- We are to be people who acknowledge that the person God calls us to be is always being put to the test by evil and who, therefore, recognize our need for God’s strength to keep us faithful to his daily call.

Here is a prayer of petition which is also a portrait of the person we are called to be as sons and daughters of our heavenly Father and disciples of his beloved Son.