

**30<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time, October 27, 2019**  
**The Prayer that Pierces the Cloud**

In the gospel we read last Sunday, the Lord urged us to pray always and not grow weary (Luke 18:1). According to St John Damascene, prayer is a lifting up of our hearts and minds to God. When we pray, we tap into the benevolent power of the all-loving, all-knowing, and almighty God. In prayer, we open wide our hearts and hands to receive what the Lord, in his unconditional love, is more ready to give than we are to ask. The highest form of worship or prayer is the Holy Mass. This is because it is the total self-offering of the only Son of God to the Father in the Holy Spirit for the redemption of man and all creation.

Last Sunday, we also pointed out that wise parents do not indulge their child's every

whim and fancy. In other words, when we do not receive exactly what we ask of God, he always has something better, greater, and more salutary to give to us. An example in that regard is when Paul prayed three times that a particular thorn in his flesh be taken away from him (Corinthians 12:8). The Lord said, no Paul, “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness” (2 Corinthians 12:9).

According to the Word of God, Paul’s prayer was denied in order that Paul would not be too elated and lose eternal salvation due to the abundance of revelation that God had given him.

Today, we will explore the kind of prayer that pierces the clouds and reaches heaven. What is this kind of prayer? What is the prerequisite for a pure and efficacious prayer? What can we do so that our prayers

will always achieve the end for which we pray? Firstly, we should be humble. Humility enables us to understand that we do not know how to pray, as we ought. Humility enables us to tear asunder the lie of self-sufficiency and to puncture the bubbles of arrogance. Humility prevents us from having an attitude of 'I know it all and nobody can tell me anything.' Humility helps us to be honest with ourselves and acknowledge that we are imperfect. As the Scripture says, "We have all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). Cutting to the chase, our Holy Mother, the Church, teaches:

The first movement of prayer of petition is asking forgiveness, like the tax collector in the parables: "God be merciful to me a sinner" (Luke 18:13). This is a prerequisite for pure and righteous prayer. A trusting humility brings us back into the

light of communion between the Father and his Son Jesus Christ, and with one another, so that we receive from him whatever we ask [ 1 Jn 3:22] CCC 2631).

Our first reading today clearly states that the prayer of the lowly pierces the cloud (Sirach 35:17). This is because the humble or lowly person does not make himself into a god. He knows that God is God and that he is a creature created by God. This is why following the example of Christ, the son of the living God, a lowly person aligns his will to the will of God. The Word of God says, “He who serves God willingly is heard, his petition reaches heaven” (Sirach 35:16). Here we see the answer to the object of our inquiry. The prayer that pierces heaven and reaches God’s ear, is not an eloquently waxed, self-serving, self-

praising, and soulless prayer. It is the prayer of the humble.

The gospel parable of the two people who went to the temple to pray illustrates this. The Pharisee was not humble. He presented himself as sinless, perfect, and “holier than thou.” He actually did not show that he needed God. He had everything under control. On the other hand, the publican was honest about himself. He knew that he was a sinner, imperfect, and perhaps a thief. He asked for forgiveness. His prayer reached heaven. That is what the Bible means when it says that he was justified. The Lord made this abundantly clear to our ancestors, when He said, “If my people, upon whom my name has been pronounced, humble themselves and pray, and seek my presence and turn from their

evil ways, I will hear them from heaven and pardon their sins and heal their land” (2Chr 7:14).

What then are we to do? We must remember that humility is the ground on which our prayers stand and that we do not always know how to pray as we ought. We are to allow the Holy Spirit, the Artisan of prayer, to lead us.

*Lord we ask you to touch our hearts right now to help us be the people you have called us to be. Strip us of our imperfections and robe us in your discernment, wisdom and knowledge that our prayers may be pure and efficacious. We ask for that power that Holy Spirit gives that our prayers may pierce the cloud and reach heaven.*

May the Lord rescue us from every evil threat and bring us safely to His heavenly kingdom. All glory to Him forever and ever. Amen (2 Timothy 4:18).