

Teach us to pray O Lord,

In the Name of the father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost +

In reading this portion of the Gospel of St. John we may focus on the issue of presence and absence. In fact last year I preached on that subject and indeed the Lord is preparing the disciples for His death. But in focusing solely on the passion that is to come, we might miss the importance of the story of the woman giving birth.

The birth story is a reference to the New Life of Resurrection and how that event changes not only the disciples, but the whole world. As each new soul is born into this world a myriad of possibilities exists. What will be the child's vocation? How will their life affect the lives of others? How will their life and the lives of their children affect the world?

And so it is with the Resurrection of the Lord. The new life is shared with all those who will accept and believe. They will become the adopted children of God through Baptism and the indwelling of the Holy Ghost. This event in their lives will not only change them, but can and should change the world.

Following the story of woman giving birth the Lord says this to the disciples to the noting changing of the old for the new:

*Truly, truly, I say to you, if you ask anything of the Father, he will give it to you in my name. Hitherto you have asked nothing in my name; ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full.*

The Opus Dei, the work of God, is prayer, but what is prayer? The last two sentences of the Gospel offer to us a profound truth of the effect upon our relationship with God and how that relationship was to change with the Resurrection of the Lord.

The Very Nature of how we offer our prayers and petition to the Father has changed. The old rituals are gone the new is made evident to us.

We understand this profound truth in two ways. The first is the Theological Understanding that builds into the reality of the Trinitarian theology we profess in the Creeds.

We Believe in God the Father Almighty, Jesus Christ his son our Lord and the Holy Ghost. We believe them to One God in unity but revealed to us in the three persons of the Trinity. The nature of each being united into the One true and living God and yet unique in function

In the Letter to the Hebrews (4:14-16) we read these words:

*Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we have not a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*

These words can be used a summation of our understanding of the role of the second person of the Trinity and the function of the Christ. That Jesus came to be a Sacrifice for our sins, to take upon Himself our nature that He might be the expiation for our sins and an example of how Human life can be lived

It is through that through that Sacrifice we might approach the Throne of Grace in His Name.

That is the theological or we must say the speculative understanding of the role of the second person of the Trinity. Or we might say what has been revealed to us in the Sacred Scriptures and how we as human being have come to understand. And this is what the Church has taught throughout the generations that followed.

The practical application of this understanding affects how we pray, we worship and how we live. This brings us back to the Opus Dei. The Work of God in our lives, our prayers and all the actions we take that either conform or do not conform to the teaching of Jesus.

First, is the practical reality of how we pray. In the Name of Jesus, by the power of the Holy Ghost enlivening our souls and spirits to cry out to God our Father

Note our liturgical prayers: Many begin addressed to God the Father and end in these words; through the same our Lord Jesus Christ, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the same Spirit ever, one God, world without end. What we are doing in reality is exactly what Jesus told us to do in the Gospel. Ask of the Father in my Name!

The second issue is for us an awareness that we are praying always. Fixing dinner for the family is the prayer for unity, health and wholeness for each member of the family.

Working day by day is the prayer that recognizes our role in this life. As Adam was to till the soil so too are we to work and that work should be to the Greater Glory of God. It does not matter what work we are called to do, but we are to work honestly, with integrity and treat everyone as a child of God.

Finally there is our personal life. This is the issue that the Epistle addresses this Morning.

St. Peter is writing to the church, specifically to the church in Asia Minor but all the application of this letter and like the all of Bible it applies to all people and for all time. Much like the letters of St. Paul we have the pastor writing to his flock to address the issues that distress them.

In this portion of the letter Peter is reminding them that actions are seen by others and by God. That all they do should be for the glory of God and that in this place and time they are subject to structures and organizations that may seem to be contrary to God's Will.

The role of Christian has not changed in our day. Our lives are our prayer. What we do, how we act, how we interact with others all offers to the world either a witness of what is possible for those who accept the Lord as their savior or demonstrates that we Christians are no different.

This is the hypocrisy that causes many to reject our faith. It is our sin when people look at us and do not see something different from what the world offers to them.

As one who was formed in the Benedictine Tradition we recognize that we are to pray constantly. My Father in Faith Benedict did not reject the world; rather he recognized the call of each Christian to use the goods of the world and to be light and leaven.

As Anglican and we have a source to guide us in recognizing how our lives affect the full nature of our prayer. Consider these words in the General Thanksgiving:

*And, we beseech thee, give us that due sense of all thy mercies, that our hearts may be unfeignedly thankful; and that we show forth thy praise, not only with our lips, but in our lives, by giving up ourselves to thy service, and by walking before thee in holiness and righteousness all our days*

Perhaps this week we can all read the General Thanksgiving in the BCP and contemplate our prayer and our lives.

What the Lord taught us and finally, the question:

Do we lives reflect our prayers?

AMEN