

One Sunday after Mass as most of the parishioners were making their way out of the church, I noticed a woman who remained behind and was kneeling in the pew making her prayer of thanksgiving. She was leaning slightly forward wearing a covering over her head bowing in deep prayer. As I walked by her it was as if time had stopped and I could see that her soul was united to God. I was a young man when I witnessed this woman in prayer and did not at that time have many experiences of personal prayer. I remember thinking to myself when I saw her that I wanted to have a prayer life like hers; I wanted to be so close to the Lord that everything else in life is secondary to being alone with Him in prayer.

In our Gospel this Sunday, one of Jesus' disciples noticed Him in prayer. He too must have been touched to witness our Lord in prayer, that is, conversing and in union with the Father. He asked Jesus, "Lord, teach us to pray..." Jesus taught them and entrusted them with the "Our Father". From the moment of our Baptism and this prayer that Jesus has given to His Church we can now call upon our God as our Father. He is a loving Father that only gives us good things when we call upon Him. Jesus reminded us of that with the parable in our Gospel this Sunday. "If then you who are wicked, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?"

Jesus invites us in the Gospel to persevere in prayer. "And I tell you, ask and you will receive; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you."

In our first reading from the Book of Genesis, Abraham was conversing with God. “In those days, the Lord said: ‘The outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is so great, and their sin so grave, that I must go down and see whether or not their actions fully correspond to the cry against them that comes to me...’” Abraham was alone with God and questioned whether He would destroy these sinful cities if there were innocent people living among them. Abraham at first, through his prayer received from God His guarantee that if there were 50 innocent people God would not destroy the sinful cities. Through Abraham’s perseverance in prayer, God reduced the number to only 10 innocent people. Sadly, those cities were both completely destroyed...there was not even 10 innocent people among them to prevent this.

The grave sin that brought about God’s wrath, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah was the sin of homosexuality. It is one of the four sins that cries to heaven for justice. It is still a grave sin and it continues to cry to heaven for justice even though in our times our culture and society wish to normalize it. Even though we see its ugliness and evilness in our Church, among some of our Clergy, and Hierarchy it remains a grave sin that cries to heaven for justice. The Church recognizes the struggle of those who have same sex attractions and encourages them to follow Christ by living a chaste life. The path to holiness and salvation is available to all of us, that is, by staying close to the sacraments, following the Commandments, and the perennial teachings of the Church, and living a life of virtue.

Abraham’s prayer with God encourages us to persevere in prayer. He was able to move the heart of God from requiring 50 innocent people to only 10. If there were only 10 innocent people God would have changed His mind and not destroyed those evil cities.

The encounter between God and Abraham invites us to live innocent lives, that is, a holy, virtuous life. We remain innocent and pleasing to God by going often to the Sacrament of Reconciliation, which cleanses us from our sins and makes our souls right before God and then coming to the Banquet of the Eucharist where we receive the Most Holy Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.

In our time the outcry is so great and their sin so grave. God continues to call men to the Priesthood, and men and women to consecrated life. The virtuous and holy lives of a few can change the outcome of the many. Keep calling upon Him in prayer. He makes us the promise that everyone who asks will receive, the one who seeks will find, and the one who knocks the door will be opened. Prayer and especially persevering in prayer is vital in discerning God's call and will. Keep praying because Jesus makes us the promise that God the Father loves to give us the gifts of the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him.