

Father Paul Homiley 24/05/2020

Prayer is at the heart of the Christian life - both private and corporate prayer and today's Mass readings all feature aspects of this for prayer is the beating heart and the very breath of the Church. While our churches remain closed except to Priests offering the daily round of prayer and Mass alone, the prayer of the whole people of God continues as so many of the social media platforms show that " the voice of prayer is never silent". I pray that soon we can share our corporate prayer and worship in our holy places in bodily fellowship with one another. Today's first reading sees the disciples praying together in the upper room: the second reading exalts us all to praise God for his blessings and in the Gospel Jesus prays to his Father.

So we see that if we love God we have to have the habit of prayer in our lives. There's the story of the man who told his wife he wanted a divorce, shocked she asked why, he said because you have always been indifferent to me - never cared for what i did or thought. So, supposed God appears to us now and tells us we are close to the end of our relationship with him. No doubt shocked we would ask why and he might respond " you are indifferent to me - you never pray, never seek my company and don't even ask for those earthly things you value so highly". We need to regularly examine our habit of prayer so it becomes the spirit of prayer so we can turn our hearts and minds to God and not be distracted by other things.

There is the story about S Benedict who was travelling on horseback when he met a peasant walking who said to the Saint, " you got an easy job - why don't I become a man of prayer then i too would be travelling on horseback "! The Saint replied, " you think the job of prayer is easy, well i ll give you this horse if you can say one Our Father without any distraction ". The peasant thought it a bargain and closing his eyes he started to say The Our Father aloud. He got as far as thy kingdom come then suddenly stopped, looked up and said, " shall i get the saddle and bridle too".

In today's gospel Jesus again shows us how to pray - recognising the Father's will in his life over his own he prays not just for himself but for others. So in these difficult days as in all our days may we pray as Jesus has taught us and may that prayer draw down the great God into our little hearts and drive our hungry souls up to the fullness of God.

The person who stands best is the one who kneels the most. May the God in whom we trust and to whom we pray bless us all.

Father Paul.