

The Lord's Prayer: A Meditation.

In our commitment to God through his Son Jesus a change takes place within us that involves an immediate inter-communication between God and ourselves and therefore between ourselves and God.

This exchange is respectful both of God's commandment and of our own free response and obedience. Prayer is not legalistic, false or capricious, but it is social and individual; it is natural and rational. Our prayers are offered to God through Jesus because he is the 'Truth' for prayer.

"Lord, teach us to pray" asked the disciples. (Luke 11.1). Our Lord's response has given the Church a unifying pattern of prayer for every age and no doubt intended for repetition. The Lord's Prayer includes his Passion, the struggle against evil, our own part and involvement with the World, and finally the priority of God's Word. "...for yours is the kingdom, the power, and the glory for ever. Amen".

What was significant about the way our Lord gave this prayer was the positive relationship we are able to have with God the Father. In that way we appeal to God our Father by asking him for that which he alone can bring about. I mentioned just now the social or corporate aspect when we say 'our Father' for it is the combined effect of our prayers that is important. It follows that this sharing in prayer is very much involved in our day to day way of life especially at this time of pandemic when communication with each other depends so much on our Benefice website. "For we are God's fellow workers" (1Cor 3.9) and God graciously commands us to call on him as 'Our Father'.

But there is one question that needs to be considered and that is: How is the Christian able to know the right things to ask in prayer? The answer, I believe is to be found in the singular view of Christ and our understanding of his life and teaching that inspires our faith. St. Paul expressed this aspect of prayer when he said "...the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with sighs too deep for words. And he who searches the hearts of men knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God". (Romans 8). A.M Hunter in his commentary refers to this as "...the divine within us appealing to the divine above".

The Lord's Prayer is trustworthy for it bears within it the certainty of it being answered, for whenever it is said it becomes an interruption into the troubled ways of this World. "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done" enables us to see a light that makes everything appear in a new light. The Lord's Prayer is a prophetic prayer whenever we say 'Our Father' for it is the action by which we see God's World in a new light, for when combined with our other petitions we make known God's kingdom of grace and God's kingdom of power.

Lord, teach us how to pray aright
With reverence and with fear;
Though fallen sinners in thy sight,
We may, we must, draw near.

Give these, and then thy will be done;
thus, strengthened with all might,
we, through thy Spirit and thy Son,
Shall pray, and pray aright.
James Montgomery 1771-1854.

Rev Bernard Hughes.