

**What is prayer?**

**Why do we pray?**

**What happens when our prayer seems to go unheard?**

**Or at least unanswered?**

**What is our reaction?**

**We know some of the various types of prayer**

**Adoration**

**Love**

**Thanksgiving**

**Intercessory**

**Petitions**

**Worship**

**Public prayer**

**Private prayer**

**Devotionals like the Rosary and the Divine Mercy Chaplet**

**Which can be any type of prayer**

**And if God knows what we need before we ask**

**Why does He want us to ask?**

**Our readings today have much to teach us about prayer**

**In our first reading, the Lord comes to Abraham**

**He has heard the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah**

**So he comes to investigate**

**Sending angels into the city**

**He remains with Abraham**

**Abraham knows the cities are in jeopardy**

**Yet he intercedes for them**

**If you find 50 innocent people**

**Will you destroy the city?**

**45? Will you destroy the city for the lack of 5 people?**

**40? 30? 10?**

**Time and again Abraham intercedes for these people**

**Should the innocent suffer with the guilty?**

**The righteousness and prayers of a few can save many**

**In the end, the cities are destroyed**

**But through Abraham's perseverance, Lot and His family are saved**

**The Apostles knew this story**

**They knew the Jewish structure of prayer**

**The law spelled this out clearly**

**Not only what to say**

**But when to say the prayers**

**But they saw something different in Jesus**

**Something that spoke to their hearts**

**So they ask**

***Lord, teach us to pray***

**First, Jesus opens a whole new meaning to prayer**

**It is a communal prayer**

**Say *Our Father***

**Not mine or me**

**And he tells them to call him *Father***

**This was something brand new**

**To have a personal relationship with our heavenly Father**

**Only Jesus could reveal that to us**

**We can only have this relationship through Christ**

**By being baptized, we become his brothers and sisters**

**We become eligible to inherit the Kingdom that is promised**

**Our prayer must show reverence for God**

**Surrender to His will**

**It acknowledges our dependence on him for everything**

**Material and spiritual**

**It is a request for mercy**

**And a desire to be an agent of mercy ourselves**

**And finally a request for protection from evil**

**From being afflicted by sin**

**This is what the words of the Our Father teach us**

**The words of the *Our Father* are not magic words**

**It is more than a specific set of words to pray**

**It is not something to say to get God do what we want**

**It teaches us what we should be seeking in the first place**

**What we should be asking for**

**This is the desire God has written into our hearts**

**Then Jesus uses a story to teach us about perseverance**

**To approach God again and again**

**As often as needed**

**To place our prayers before Him**

**Not so we can change God**

**But so we can be changed**

**God desires to give us everything we need**

**Everything good that will draw us to Him**

**We have to learn how to listen**

**How to ask**

**And how to persevere in our requests**

**It is said God answers in three basic ways**

**A yes to our request**

**Not now, but later**

**And are you kidding?**

We think we know what will make us happy

We can ask for athletic prowess

I could ask to be an NBA center

Or a Major League second baseman

Or we might think a new car would make us happy

Perhaps a big raise at work

We often think material possessions will make us happy

Why it is that someone making \$50,000 wants \$75,000

The same reason one making 3 million wants a new contract for 5

We think that will bring happiness

The next level is where it's at

But more often we simply want more

But are we able to see blessings in challenging situations in life?

Can being unemployed have any benefits?

Can we see blessings in an unplanned pregnancy?

Can an illness bring about something positive?

Blessed Fulton Sheen wrote:

*Every human ideal is lost by being attained*

When we can hold in our hands what we desire

We no longer find pleasure in it

So where do we find happiness?

He tells us: *it is in self-denial*

**This is a paradox of Christian living**

**Where even the disappointments in life can be used for the greater good**

**Health, power, honor are fleeting**

**They can be gone as quickly as they come**

**And they cannot bring happiness in themselves**

**Complete happiness only comes with eternity in heaven**

**But it can and does start here**

**But we need to recognize where it comes from**

**And how to desire it**

**And we do that through prayer**

**True prayer**

**Listening first**

**It is said we have 2 ears and one mouth for a reason**

**Asking, seeking**

**For what we think we need**

**But more important for what we truly need**

**God knows our hearts**

**He formed them, He created them**

**He knows what we need**

**He desires to give us everything**

**Even what we do not specifically ask for**

**When this is what we seek**

**It is not God that is changed**

**The situations we prayed about may not change**

**We may still need a job**

**We may still have cancer**

**Our loved one may still die**

**But with genuine prayer**

**One thing never remains the same**

**Ourselves**

**We acknowledge all things are in God's hands**

**And although we may not understand**

**We trust that they are in good hands**

**Ask and receive**

**Knock and it will be opened**

**Again and again**