

## 5<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY OF LENT B HOMILY

How is your Lenten journey going? Tired? Have you had enough of Lent and want it to be over? Or, are you looking at the calendar and thinking: There are only two weeks remaining before Easter and I haven't been completely on track with the promises I made on Ash Wednesday. I should get busy and do what I intended to do for Lent while there's still some time remaining.

"In the days when Christ Jesus was in the flesh, he offered prayers and supplications with loud cries and tears to the one who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverence." This testimony affords us an opportunity to examine our own prayer style. None of us is going to equal the reverence of Jesus in the eyes of God. God hears our prayers but do we hear what we are praying? Is it really a prayer?

Let's focus on our private prayer times as opposed to our public prayer times such as Mass or other forms of communal prayer. Take a moment to look more deeply at how you pray. For example, when you pray how do you begin your prayer? To who or whom do you address your prayer: is it to God, to Jesus, to the Holy Spirit, to Mary, etc.?

When do you offer your prayer? Do you have a daily routine of offering prayers upon waking up and before going to sleep at the end of your day? Does this prayer contain the basic litany of the names of those you pray for daily? Is it the same at the beginning and the end of the day; or the same with a few changes? Are there times when something happens and you feel the urge to pray? When somebody's name or face comes suddenly to you out of nowhere, do you take the opportunity to pray for this person right away?

Where do you offer your prayer? Is it in a place where you are by yourself? Are you able to pray while driving? Are you able to pray when exercising? Do you find yourself offering a prayer while at work? Do you offer a spontaneous prayer wherever you are if a situation arises where you think prayer would be helpful?

How do you pray? Do you offer prayers that you have memorized? Do you offer prayers using your own words? Most people use a combination of both. Examine how Jesus prayed in various circumstances. Jesus worshipped in synagogues and in the Temple in Jerusalem and there were ritual prayers that he would have memorized. His prayers in the gospels are tailored to particular circumstances. Do you offer prayers of thanksgiving to God for all He has done for you? Do you thank God every day for His gift of life for you? Do you thank the Holy Spirit for guiding you in your thoughts and actions?

These are but a few questions we can ask ourselves concerning prayer and its place in our daily life. Lent offers us an opportunity to learn more about prayer, its benefits and its place in our daily life. The discoveries we make about prayer during this Season of Lent will help us grow in union with the Kingdom of God.