



THE THIRD CORNERSTONE OF THE MISSION: PRAYER FROM THE HEART

We have, in our examination of the Cornerstones of the Mission, spoken about metanoia and a part of that change of daily life is our relationship with God through prayer, precisely, prayer from the heart.

It is the teaching of the Church that it is the desire for God, which is written in the human heart along with the Ten Commandments of God, because man is created by God and for God; and God never ceases to draw man to Himself. Only in God will man find the truth and happiness he never stops searching for.

The Second Vatican Council states that the dignity of man rests above all...on the fact that he is called to communion with God. It states...this invitation to converse with God is addressed to man as soon as he comes into being... for if man exists, it is because God has created him through love... and through love, continues to hold him in existence. He cannot live fully according to truth unless... he freely acknowledges that love and entrusts himself to his Creator.

Prayer is a gift of grace and a purposeful action on our behalf. The enemy of God, the devil, does not want us praying because those who do not are kept away from union with God. Prayer is a fight, a battle against the reluctance of ourselves. I don't have time, I will do it later, I am busy right now and on and on with some of us actually believing that what is the point, God will never listen to me.

The Church tells us that the spiritual battle of the Christian's new life is inseparable from the battle of prayer. If we do not want to act habitually, according to the spirit of Christ, neither can we pray habitually in His name.

Prayer is an indispensable condition for being able to obey God's Commandments; those very same commandments written by the finger of God, in every heart of man.

St. Augustine writes in **De Diversis**: "whether we realize it or not, prayer is the encounter of God's thirst with ours. God thirsts that we may thirst for Him."

It is St. John in 7:37 who says that prayer is the response of faith to the free promise of salvation and also a response of love, to the thirst of the only Son of God. It is Jesus who requires conversion of heart; prayerful forgiveness from the depths of the heart; purity of heart and seeking the Kingdom of God before all else. This is the conversion needed from a son or daughter of God where everything, is to the Father.

Once committed to conversion, the heart learns to pray in faith. Jesus is the door and the way; through Him, we learn how to pray. Thru Him, we gain access to The Father. It is our faith, which despite what we sense or understand, allows us to seek God as His child. In Mark 11:24 it is Jesus who tells us: "whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you will receive it, and you will". "All things are possible to him, who believes" (Mark 9:23).

We must persuade the heart to do the will of the Father, in order that we may cooperate with the divine plan. By keeping watch in prayer we can avoid falling into temptation. It is those who knock on the door of God in faith that get what they need. It is the one who prays without ceasing, with patience and faith, who is blessed. And it is the one who seeks God with humility of heart, who will receive the mercy of God...**kyrie eleison**.

It is the mystery of prayer to The Father, which Our Lord Jesus reveals to each who come through the heart, in search of God. In John 16:24 Jesus says: "hitherto you have asked nothing in my name; ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full". If we ask in the name of Jesus, our prayer is united with Him, as our Spirit of Truth, as our Counsellor.

St. Augustine summarizes Jesus' prayer: He prays for us as our priest, prays in us, as our head, and is prayed to by us, as our God. Therefore, let us acknowledge our voice in Him and His in us.

Also Guigo the Carthusian, a spiritual writer, summarizes the disposition of the heart nourished by the Word of God in prayer: "seek in reading and you will find in meditating; knock in mental prayer and it will be opened to you by contemplation."

It is through faith, hope and charity that our prayer from the heart receives the ear of God. It was the prayer of St. John Vianney, which summarizes the prayer of this Mission: "I love you, oh my God, and my only desire is to love You until the last breath of my life. I love you, o my infinitely lovable God, and I would rather die loving You, than live without loving You. I love you, Lord, and the only grace I ask, is to love You eternally...my God, if my tongue cannot say in every moment that I love you, I want my heart to repeat it to You as often as I draw breath."

The Catechism teaches us that there is no other way of Christian prayer than Christ. Whether our prayer is communal or personal, vocal or interior, it has access to The Father only if we pray "in the name" of Jesus. The sacred humanity of Jesus is therefore the way by which the Holy Spirit teaches us to pray to God our Father.

Within the four steps of spiritual progression (its Cornerstones) within this Mission, it is this Third Cornerstone of Prayer from the Heart, which is very significant to our overall growth in the love of God. To this end we have developed prayer cenacles of the Mission to help the individual to pray and groups to pray in communion. This is done in weekly meetings in the parish as well as in the homes. Our purpose is manifold. By creating prayer cenacles we encourage community prayer, which contains its own set of indulgences and promises through the Church. It creates fellowship and brings great graces to the homes where it is conducted in. It also teaches as well as prays, thus the term prayer cenacle is used instead of prayer group as historically the word cenacle, from the Latin "**cenaculum**", is known as the upper room, the place of the last supper; the place where the apostles stayed when in

Jerusalem. As it were, the first Christian Church; the place where the Holy Spirit descended upon the disciples of Christ on Pentecost. As these are all significant events they are also symbolic for our cenacles, which meet as disciples of Christ and missionaries as in the first Christian Church. After they pray, they teach the steps of the Mission and the responsibility we have as part of the mystical body of Christ. They encourage a return to the parish to pray together in front of the Lord. They create community and redevelop Catholic neighbourhoods as neighbours pray together, and they encourage the members to the Good Works of the Mission and an active parish life.

In the development of this Cornerstone, we are now concentrating on several enhancements; one being the new publication on mission prayer cenacles to invigorate the cenacles more and the coming together twice a year of these various cenacles in central locations in their cities and states in order to promote the mission more: intercession, public prayer and comradery. The Mission has several different types of cenacles; there are cenacles, which consist of men and women or both, cenacles for children, cenacles for young adults, for businessmen and women, and for families, each with their own structures.

Currently by the grace of God and through the intercession of our Blessed Mother and St. Joseph, our angels and saints, the Mission has registered close to 9,000 of these various cenacles in which close to 182,000 people are registered as praying in these cenacles each week.

It is the Rosary, which is the instrument, the prayer of the Mission; to be precise, the Sorrowful Mysteries of the Rosary. By uniting ourselves with the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross, we too can make our lives a sacrifice to God.

Prayer is the life of the new heart. Prayer is a remembrance of God, often awakened by the memory of the heart. We are taught by the Fathers of the spiritual life in the prophetic tradition that we cannot pray at all times if we do not pray at specific times, consciously willing it. These are the special times of Christian prayer in both intensity and duration.

It is the Passion of Christ, which is that very same remembrance of God, awakened by the memory of the Heart. Each time we contemplate the love of God in the person of our Lord Jesus within His passion, our innermost desire to be at one with Him increases. Our love of Jesus opens our hearts to be with Him more within the greatest act of redemption and salvation that will ever be known to man. It is in the writings of the great saints of this Church that we are reminded of the importance of the acquisition of a great thirst for our oneness with Christ at the time of His passion. The more that we are with Him each day in this way, the more is revealed to us through the Holy Spirit.

As a Mission, we use the meditations contained within the Sorrowful Mysteries to focus our prayer in the person of Christ. It is that very same oneness with Jesus where we ask "in the name of Jesus and through His most precious and efficacious blood", for those elements in the world of today that most affect our daily lives.

It is with and by the blood of Christ where we dare ask with renewed confidence, for peace in this world, in our families and within ourselves. It is a most effective means of

community prayer as well as a means of drawing closer to our Lord as individuals as we request of Him each day, that we may come closer to Him through His passion.

Since the Rosary is an embodiment of the whole Gospel, we ask our membership to pray all of the Mysteries of the Rosary each day. However, if only one is said, let it be then the Sorrowful Mysteries.

Many Popes of our Church have written on the effectiveness of the Rosary. Pope Pius the 9th said: " give me one million families praying the Rosary and the world is saved". The Mission has now delivered over 5 million mission prayers to the faithful.

The principal difficulties and temptations facing the practice of prayer are: distraction, dryness, indifference, forgetfulness, lack of faith and discouragement. The remedy is found in faith, conversion and as our Catechism writes, in the vigilance of heart.

When we pray together, in public or community prayer such as these prayer cenacles, these difficulties and temptations facing prayer are lessened by this grand action of the Holy Spirit upon the whole of the group praying. And it is through the intercession of the Mother where we have found that using the rosary as the weapon, we can even stop wars if together we pray in the name of Jesus through the Sorrowful and Immaculate Heart of Mary.

Jesus teaches us this new life we seek through our conversion is by His words. He teaches us to ask for it by our prayer. The correctness of our life in Him will depend on the correctness of our prayer, prayer from the heart; the place where God awaits His child.