



Priestly People

SERVANTS OF THE PARACLETE

November 2017 - Vol. 33 No. 11

70
Years

SERVING CHRIST'S PRIESTS

1947-2017

Our Father, Who art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy name; Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Praying Our Ministry

Today, if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts...."

(Hebrews 3:8: 15:4-7)

The author of the letter to the Hebrews repeats his plea - open your hearts; soften them; be attentive; receive God's word. There is a sense of urgency. It is imperative that God's Word be attended to. The Word is sent, like the sunshine, the air, the rain. We dare not cover ourselves from its life sustaining influence.

There is the faint outline of the catechism definition inviting us to surrender our deepest self to be possessed by God's presence. Our lives are not to be lived in distant relations with a void between ourselves and the Divine. We are promised intimacy: lives fused and commingled as one.

We determine the quality and depth of our relations with the Divine One. Mathew, in 6:5, speaks of prayer coming from the heart of the one who uses it as a means of sinning social approval. In 6:7, he describes a heart intent on overwhelming God with a barrage of words; magic prayer; the prayer of a manipulative, insecure heart; a heart afraid to surrender and entrust one's needs into the hands of a lover.

If allowed to grow and flourish, prayer, like any relationship, will take us to new and unexpected levels of self-knowledge, affording us the opportunity to change, to become more true, authentic and simple in the presence of others."

We sometimes try to manipulate God in prayer, just like we may try to manipulate the people in our life.

Our prayer is not above scrutiny. We dare not take it for granted and assume that just because we go through the motions everything will fall into line. Our relationship with God and prayer is the foundation of that relationship, and is subject to the same distortions and self-serving manipulations as any other relationship.

Receiving The Word

Prayer will reflect the quality of our own self-understanding, our ability to let go and allow ourselves to be taken by another.

If allowed to grow and flourish, prayer, like any relationship, will take us to new and unexpected levels of self-knowledge, affording us the opportunity to change, to become more true, authentic and simple in the presence of the other. But first, we need to let go of control, the need to be in charge, to make things happen our way.

One of the major problems with prayer today is that we have grown distrustful of our sacred, divinely authored uniqueness. Thus, we ignore or make light of our need to respond from our own deep center where the divine and human intersect. We judge our prayer according to external standards of performance.

God is the one doing the initiating. We are the ones receiving.

In Hebrews 4:12-13, the author is clear in stating the radical relationship between a person and the word of God. It is the Word that is active and dynamic, not the one receiving it. It is not we who lay hold of the mystery of the Word, but rather it is we who surrender ourselves to be scrutinized, interpreted, known and judged by the Wisdom of God's Word.



Through the Word we are enlarged and transformed, raised to union with God. The similarity between this passage and our catechism definition is inescapable: we lift, open, and surrender our mind and heart to God.

Examining again the images of our biblical models, we cannot avoid

recognizing Moses and the prophets as examples of persons caught and possessed at the deepest level of their personhood. From deep within their being they were awakened and raised to unexpected heights of human possibility, thrust into a hair-raising adventure with life and new possibility as an alternative to the deadening routine of slavery.

Often God is not powerful in our lives because we have made Him too small.

Our biblical tradition of prayer calls us to forget ourselves, our self-centered pre-occupation with our agendas. We are invited to be opened to a wider and deeper perception of reality. The choice is clear; to be transformed, enlightened and enlarged by Divine Wisdom, or to impose our limited perceptions on God. Many of us live with a God no larger, no more powerful than our own definitions.

When we come to into the presence of the Divine with wonder, expectation, awe and curiosity, it is like wind rushing into a vacuum. What are perceived by many as moments of loss and failure, impotence and rage, become transformed into occasions for the release of creative prophetic energy. We refuse to be seduced by the lie of conventional wisdom.



“If today you hear his voice, harden not your hearts...”

Jesus’ nonviolent response to evil, his obedient surrender into the Father’s hands; Mary’s silent and humble “let it be done...” have shaken the earth, toppled powers, exalted the humble, as testimony to what can and must happen when hearts

are courageous and bold enough to surrender to the God of history.

The basic law of prayer requires us to acknowledge that, for us, word, gestures, times and places contain no magic power to open the mind and heart to God. True prayer in our tradition requires an initial openness to a relationship with a personal God whose unique self-expression we are.

“The Glory of God is the person who is fully alive!”

To open ourselves to this relationship is to submit ourselves to being drawn into the unfolding mystery of our true human potential. It is the unhampered, free and creative development of the person that reveals God’s Divine Image and power in history in a unique way. In this process, we are drawn away from the sham of our own shallow perceptions and egocentric desires. Prayer is surrender to a confrontation with the lies and darkness of the false self that we have mistakenly believed to be true self.

Surrendering the heart and mind in prayer, submitting to the two edged sword that is God’s living word, can be a frightening experience. Is it any wonder that we have been so creative in finding less troubling alternatives?

RAY GUNZEL SP



Servants of the Paraclete
PO Box 9
Cedar Hill, MO 63016

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

November
Newsletter

NON PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
ST. LOUIS, MO
PERMIT NO. 3252



MASS STIPENDS

We appreciate the many mass stipends that we receive. We thank you for supporting that part of our ministry. The Servants of the Paraclete receive mass stipends from our donors and they look forward to celebrating liturgy with those who offer masses for loved ones, friends and family members.

Thank you for supporting our Mass Stipend Ministry!

Name of the person to be remembered in a mass celebrated by a Servant of the Paraclete

☐ living ☐ deceased

Please send an acknowledgement card on my behalf to:

Name:

Address:

City, State, Zip:

You will receive acknowledgement of the mass stipend donation in your donor thank you letter. No need to send an acknowledgement card to yourself if you are the donor.

Please complete the mass stipend form and return to the Servants of the Paraclete Development Office.

Servants of the Paraclete • PO Box 9 • Cedar Hill, MO 63016

**DEVELOPMENT
OFFICE**

**Marian Wolaver • 636-274-5226 x303 • mwolaver@theservants.org
PO Box 9 • Cedar Hill, MO 63016**