

- This Sunday we come to the end of a beautiful three week period in which our Sunday Gospels talk to us about the need to balance the actions we are called to as Christians with quiet reflection and prayer time.
- Two weeks ago in the Gospel of the “Good Samaritan” we were taught that Christians are called to take action and bring God’ love to others, especially those in need.
- Last week’s Gospel reading ended with Jesus answering his friend Martha’s complaint that her sister Mary was lazy and not taking action - not helping with the chores and meal preparations.
- You will remember Mary was sitting near Jesus listening to him speak.
- Remember Jesus’ answer to Martha: He said “Martha you are anxious and worried about many things, there is need for only one thing – and Mary has chosen the better part”
- Today’s Gospel reading talks to us about that “one thing” - that “better part” Mary chose - Spending quiet time with the Lord in Prayer.
- When I read today’s Gospel I wondered what prompted the disciple to ask Jesus “ Lord teach us to pray”
- When you think about it, it’s not too hard to figure out.. They were with Jesus for a while now. They had the chance to observe him, they saw qualities in Jesus they admired: Determination, courage, strength, and confidence. Commitment to truth. And also a loving nature and an inner peace.
- They also saw something else. Before every important event in Jesus’ life, they saw him go off to pray: Before his public ministry, before the transfiguration, before the Sermon on the Mount, during hectic periods of teaching and healing- they saw him pray!!

- And they realized Jesus had a particular relationship with God the Father that fueled Jesus' actions, which fed those qualities they saw in Jesus. Those disciples wanted those qualities, they wanted to know and relate to God the way Jesus did.
- So they asked Jesus "teach us to pray".
- And Jesus seized that moment.
- What Jesus did next changed forever how those disciples and each of us would understand our God.
- Jesus spoke of a God so awesome, so different from anything we know. Creator of everything and yet our loving Father who cares for us, is interested in what we do, what we think. Who waits to hear what we have to say. Who wants to be actively involved in our lives. (Think about that for a moment- its amazing)
- Jesus tells us to trust that God has something wonderful in mind for you and me and encourages us to respond to God's invitation by jumping right into this relationship. How? By prayer.
- Jesus tells us we can talk to God in a particular way and he gave us this beautiful prayer to use, the "Our Father".
- It's Jesus' central teaching on prayer and probably his most definitive statement about our relationship with God.
- Jesus is not just giving us words to say- He is telling us what ought to be going on inside us – in our minds and hearts as we approach God. Lets look closely at this prayer.
- We start by calling out to God saying: "Our Father who art in heaven". Notice the words "Our Father" not "My Father" a gentle reminder we are all children of God. And immediately at the word "Father" God comes to us. He recognizes each of our voices and turns to listen.

- He wants to hear what we have to say. He's not distant; He's close and interested. Heaven doesn't necessarily mean distant. Where do you suppose heaven is?? It is wherever God is – there is heaven. In a real sense in this prayer we experience a piece of heaven because God draws near to us.
- We continue: “Hallowed be thy name”: In this short phrase we praise God for His greatness by calling Him hallowed, holy – which means different, more awesome than anything we can imagine or experience. We rejoice that God has chosen to let us get to know Him. Names are important. Someone gives us their name when they want us to know who they are. Here we thank God for revealing His name to us and we promise to honor it and keep it holy.
- “Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven”: There are probably no greater words we can use than these to demonstrate our trust in God. We tell God we want to be open to His will and His ways and His plans first and foremost – here and now and forever in heaven.
- So we pray” thy will be done” – but do we mean it? What if God's will doesn't fall in line with what we want to happen? Putting our will second can be tough. God may call us to go where we might not want to go, might be afraid to go. Jesus tells us to just trust and to remember that simply put: God's will is always about loving Him and loving others.
- Next Jesus tells us we can ask for the things we need. “Give us this day our daily bread”. Jesus tells us two things here: first, pray for the basics: not the luxury car or the winning Powerball numbers. The basics: food to eat, a home, our health, works to do, people to love us. Jesus calls these things “bread” and He tells us to trust that God knows and will provide what we need each

day. And notice we are to pray “give us” not “give me”. We are called to pray for each other’s needs.

- Second, Jesus tells us to ask for these things one day at a time. Not what we need tomorrow or next week, -- today. Jesus tells us if we pray for what we need today, God will give us the things, the people, the work to do for the day.
- If we trust like this each day, we become free from worry about the future because we come to know God will be there tomorrow, and the day after and the day after that- giving us what we need for those days. If you are a worrier like I am- if you struggle with anxiety, try remembering this- it really helps!!
- “Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us”: This is a tough one. This sentence recognizes there are times we offend God and each other. No one is perfect, we are human. Jesus knows this. He realizes we have setbacks and failings and He wants us to know forgiveness is available. He tells us don’t be afraid to ask for forgiveness. God loves us and wants us to return to a loving relationship with Him. God forgives, it is His nature.
- But there is something more to this sentence. Jesus tells in order for God to send us His forgiveness and mercy we must first forgive others who have hurt us. God is not being difficult here, just teaching us when there is anger and bitterness in our hearts there is no room – no space- for **His** love to fill our hearts.
- Finally, we pray “ Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.”
- Jesus knows the world we live in, He lived here too. He knows temptation is part of the world, its unavoidable. There will be people, situations and things that try to separate us from God. So Jesus tells us to ask God to walk with us, stay close by us, guide our words and

actions. Help us avoid temptation and sin. Make us strong believers and better followers.

- In the final part of today's Gospel reading Jesus assures us Our Father will respond to our requests. Jesus urges us, just keep asking, seeking and knocking.
- In the very last paragraph Jesus tells us if an earthly father knows how to give good gifts to his child how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?
- Notice Jesus says earthly fathers give "good gifts" but the heavenly Father gives the Holy Spirit. Why does Jesus differentiate here?
- Because the Holy Spirit is the greatest gift that can be given. To receive the Holy Spirit is to receive the love of God, the life of God. It is to receive God himself who comes to live in us – we become the temple where God dwells.
- With this gift, we begin to think and see more as God does. God's priorities become our priorities and our actions. - in short we become more like Jesus – and like Martha's sister Mary we can choose the better part , the one thing that Jesus says really matters -- a close loving relationship with "our Father".