

Reflections

Father Nicolas Schwizer

127 March 15, 2012

Teach Us to Pray

Jesus would pray. Frequently he felt the desire to leave, for a moment, the interested crowd and those hard-headed disciples, to retire to a separate place or a mountain, and there He would be alone with the Father.

For himself, He had nothing to ask for.....neither bread, nor forgiveness, nor protection, nor favors. But in God's presence, He would again be what He was. He would be filled with peace. He would listen in the depth of his soul. The awareness of his childlikeness would fill him with strength and joy. Once again He would know that He was the beloved Son whom the Father had filled with his gifts. Again He would feel imbued with that infinite patience, with that untiring mercy of the Father, with that dynamic and creative love. His prayer would overflow in words of confidence and love: *"Father, I know that You always hear me. Father, I bless You. I give You thanks. Father, everything yours is mine....."*

And when He would return.....glowing, radiant, renewed.....the apostles would ask themselves: *"Where is He coming from? What has happened to Him? Who has been able to transform Him in that way?"* Someone would tell them He had gone to pray. Then they would say to themselves: *"Ah, if only we would know how to pray that way! What a pity that nobody taught us to pray!"* And one day they dared to say: *"Lord, teach us to pray."*

And Jesus taught them that beautiful prayer, the Our Father. It is a prayer very similar to that of Jesus: *Hallowed be thy Name – thy Kingdom come – thy Will be done.* But, at the same time, it is a prayer adapted to the needs of the disciples: *Give us our daily bread – forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us – lead us not into temptation.*

More than a prayer to recite, it is a prayer to meditate. Did He not need an entire night to only pronounce one verse of the Our Father: *"Let not my will be done, but thine!"* It is a prayer which would transform the apostles..... mould them from within... a prayer which would lead them throughout their lives to the same total surrender of their Lord.

Through this prayer, Jesus shows us the true face of the Father: He is so good that – in the eyes of those who are superficial – He seems a bit weak; He is so loving that He does not know how to deny anything; He gives himself to us so much that, apparently, one does with him whatever one wants.

In the Our Father, Jesus attacks our skepticism and our lack of confidence.....He shakes up our timidity and affirms with all his might that there is no limit to Divine generosity. Our desires are seen limited only by our fears; our prayers only have the boundaries of our inconsistency; our carrying things out only fails because of our lack of faith. One must never seek in God the reasons for our failures.

The only obstacle for us to be heard is not the difficulty for disposing the Father in our favor, it is the difficulty of convincing ourselves that we must go to Him with faith. The only resistance which can oppose a persevering prayer is not that of the Father who refuses to give, but ours in our insisting not to receive.

But it is not about our becoming even more interested than what we already are. The only thing which can be asked for, the only thing which God can give, is Himself.....his spirit.....his love. Therefore, let us be careful with God's gifts: they are full of life, surprising, active, dangerous to our egoism and laziness. God's gift makes one give. God's forgiveness makes one forgive. God's love makes one love as He did.....even unto the Passion and the Cross.

Let us pray the Our Father with that same spirit, with God's spirit, so that it may be fruitful in us.....so that it may be fertile in our life as Christians.

Task

Reflect on each phrase of the Our Father.

If you wish to subscribe, comment on the text or give your testimony, write to: pn.reflexiones@gmail.com

Translation: Carlos Cantú, Schoenstatt Family Federation, La Feria, Texas USA 12292011