

Homily by Fr.Robin CRM – 17th Sunday in Ordinary Time (Year C)

Readings: Genesis 18:20–32; Colossians 2:12–14; Luke 11:1–13

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Today's readings draw us deep into one of the most beautiful and essential aspects of our Christian life — prayer, especially prayer rooted in faith, persistence, and relationship with God.

1. Prayer is a Relationship, Not a Ritual

In the Gospel, the disciples ask Jesus, *“Lord, teach us to pray.”* They had seen how deeply Jesus prayed — not out of duty, but out of love. He teaches them the Our Father, a prayer not only of words, but of an attitude: calling God “Father” means that we approach Him not as a distant master, but as a loving parent who knows and cares for His children.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church reminds us:

“Prayer is the raising of one’s mind and heart to God” (CCC 2559),
and again,

“In prayer, the faithful God's initiative of love always comes first; our own first step is always a response.” (CCC 2567)

Our prayer, then, is not just asking for things, but entering into the loving conversation of a child with the Father who always listens.

2. Be Persistent in Prayer

Jesus continues by encouraging *persistence*. He tells the parable of the friend knocking at midnight and says, *“Ask, and it will be given to you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened to you.”* Notice the progression: Ask. Search. Knock. This reflects a growing intensity and perseverance in prayer.

This mirrors what we see in the first reading, where Abraham intercedes for Sodom. He doesn't just pray once; he prays again and again, each time boldly reducing the number of the righteous needed to spare the city. Abraham's dialogue with God is striking — it's respectful, but also daring. He pleads with a merciful God, showing us that intercessory prayer is powerful.

As St. Augustine said:

“God does not delay to hear our prayers because He has no mind to give; but that by enlarging our desires, He may give us the more largely.”

God’s apparent “delay” is often His way of stretching our hearts, forming our desires to align more with His.

3. Prayer Is Possible Because of What Christ Has Done

The second reading from Colossians reminds us why we can approach God with such confidence: we were buried with Christ in baptism and raised with Him through faith. Our sins have been forgiven, the debt cancelled, the barriers removed.

Because of this, we are no longer slaves or strangers — we are beloved children of the Father. This is why Jesus can say, *“If you who are evil know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!”* (Luke 11:13)

When we pray, we don’t need to manipulate God or prove our worth. We are already His children, and He delights in giving us what we truly need — especially the gift of the Holy Spirit, who helps us to pray (cf. Romans 8:26).

So what does all this mean for us today?

- First, don’t give up on prayer. Even when it feels dry, silent, or unanswered — God is working in the waiting.
- Second, be bold in your prayer. Like Abraham, intercede for others — your family, your parish, the suffering world.
- Third, remember that prayer isn’t about changing God’s mind — it’s about forming our hearts.
- Finally, trust in the Father’s love. Jesus tells us that the Father gives not just “things” — but the Holy Spirit Himself, the greatest gift of all.

St. Teresa of Avila once said:

“Prayer is nothing else than a close sharing between friends; it means taking time frequently to be alone with Him who we know loves us.”

Conclusion

Dear friends, God is not indifferent to our cries. He is the Father who sees us, knows us, and longs to draw us closer. Let us take the invitation of this Sunday's readings seriously: to pray with confidence, with persistence, and with love — knowing that through Christ, our prayers rise like incense before the throne of grace.

Let us pray every day: *"Lord, teach us to pray."*

And may our lives become a living prayer.

Amen.