

“Lord, teach us to pray . . .”



PASSION SUNDAY LENT 2024
IN THE WORLDWIDE YEAR OF PRAYER 2024 AND
CELEBRATING 150 YEARS OF THE DIOCESE OF SANDHURST.

From the Readings

The Lord has given me a disciple's tongue. So that I may know how to reply to the wearied he provides me with speech. Each morning he wakes me to hear, to listen like a disciple. The Lord has opened my ear. *Isaiah 50:4-5*

His state was divine, yet Christ Jesus did not cling to his equality with God but emptied himself to assume the condition of a slave, and became as men are, and being as all men are, he was humbler yet, even to accepting death, death on a cross. But God raised him high and gave him the name which is above all other names so that all beings in the heavens, on earth and in the underworld, should bend the knee at the name of Jesus and that every tongue should acclaim Jesus Christ as Lord, to the glory of God the Father. *Philippians 2:6-11*

They had Jesus bound and took him away and handed him over to Pilate. Pilate questioned him: 'Are you the king of the Jews?' He answered, 'It is you who say it.' And the chief priests brought many accusations against him. Pilate questioned him again. 'Have you no reply at all? See how many accusations they are bringing against you! But to Pilate's amazement, Jesus made no further reply. At festival time Pilate used to release a prisoner for them, anyone they asked for. Now a man called Barabbas was then in prison with the rioters who had committed murder during the uprising. When the crowd went up and began to ask Pilate the customary favour, Pilate answered them, 'Do you want me to release for you the king of the Jews? For he realised it was out of jealousy that the chief priests had handed Jesus over. The chief priests, however, had incited the crowd to demand that he should release Barabbas for them instead. Then Pilate spoke again: 'But in that case, what am I to do with the man you call king of the Jews?' They shouted back, 'Crucify him!' Pilate asked them, 'Why? What harm has he done?' But they shouted all the louder, 'Crucify him!' So Pilate, anxious to placate the crowd, released Barabbas for them, and having ordered Jesus to be scourged, handed him over to be crucified. *Mark 15:1-5*

Teach us to Pray

I: THE 'EXAMEN' OR EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE

EXAMEN is the putting into action of that daily dying which at all ages and in all circumstances of life constitutes our passage to God with Christ in faith. Three times a day at least, more if I can, I place myself before him to check on the orientation of my life. Many times a day I lift up my gaze and my heart to him." Laplace, Jean, S.J., *Prayer: According to the Scriptures*, 48.

Among all the voices that surround and beckon us, we need to discern the unique cadence of God's voice. And we have a number of principles that come to us from Jesus, from Scripture, and from the deep wells of our Christian tradition that can help us discern God's voice among the multitude of voices that beckon us:

The voice of God is recognised both in whispers, and in thunder and in storm.

The voice of God is recognised in the call to what's higher and invites us to holiness, even as it is recognised in the call to humility.

The voice of God is the one that most challenges and stretches us, even as it is the only voice that ultimately soothes and comforts us.

The voice of God is always heard in a privileged way in the poor, even as it beckons us through the voice of the artist and the intellectual.

The voice of God always invites us to live beyond all fear, even as it inspires holy fear.

The voice of God is always heard wherever there is genuine enjoyment and gratitude, even as it asks us to deny ourselves and die to ourselves.

The voice of God, it would seem, is found in paradox, but it is the voice of someone who knows us intimately and calls each of us by name.

Rolheiser, Ronald, *Prayer: Our Deepest Longing*, 16-17.

II: THE OUR FATHER – THE PRAYER THAT JESUS TAUGHT US

- **This, “lead us not into temptation,” is not a good translation ...** [Another] translation ... means “Do not let me fall into temptation.” I am the one who falls. It is not God who tosses me into temptation ... The one who leads us into temptation is Satan. ... The meaning of our prayer is, “When Satan leads me into temptation, please God, give me a hand, give me your hand. It is like the painting in which Jesus holds out his hand to Peter, who is imploring him, “Lord, save me, I am drowning, give me your hand!” (cf. Mt 14:30) Jesus is the hope, the anchor. Pope Francis, *Our Father*, 93.
- **We must remember we are never alone.** Some of us may be far away from God ... but the Gospel of Jesus Christ reveals to us that God cannot be without us. ... What a great mystery is this! And this certainty is the source of our hope Jesus does not tell us to deal with it and go it alone, but to turn to the Father and ask him with trust. Pope Francis, *Our Father*, 98.
- **But deliver us from evil.** There is evil. Evil is not something intangible that spreads like the fog ... In the end this is the meaning of the verse “deliver us from evil” ... I am convinced there is no dialoguing. How did Jesus act with Satan? He drove him away, or, as he did in the desert, he used the Word of God. Not even Jesus ever began a dialogue with Satan ... In the end we must say, “be gone, be gone!” Pope Francis, *Our Father*, 101.

FOR THINKING AND TALKING

- What words or phrases stand out for you in the readings and insights on prayer?
- What insights might you take with you on your own journey?

Let Us Pray

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.*

