**The Seventeenth Sunday of Ordinary Time
July 27, 2025**

One day a shepherd boy wanted to pray to God but he did not know how to pray. He was on bended knees and he began reciting the alphabet a, b, c, d and so on to z. He repeated his prayer several times. A gentleman was passing on that way and saw him. He asked the boy, “What are you doing, my little friend?” The boy replied, “I am praying, sir.” Surprised, the man said, “But why are you reciting the alphabet?” The boy explained, “I don’t know any prayers, sir but I want God to take care of me and help me to take care of the sheep. So, I thought if I said all I that knew, He could put the letters together and spell all that I wanted to say and should say.” The man smiled and said, “Bless your heart. You are right, God will.”

Yes, my dear brothers and sisters, we all pray to God in our own way, and trust in faith to protect us, saves us, and make us fruitful on earth.

In the first reading Abraham offer an intercessory prayer for the innocent people in Sodom and Gomorrah to saves their lives. Even though there were not ten good people in the city, God showed His patience in listening to Abraham and offering to show mercy to the people.

Today’s Gospel tells us a lot about prayer. Be persistent. Ask for what you need. Be assured of God’s concern for you. Man is a bundle of needs; he needs to turn to God at every step. Prayer is the way to do so. Jesus not only taught us how to pray but invited us to join our prayers to His. Many centuries ago a holy man wrote, “We pray together with Christ since He is our brother. We pray through Christ, since He is our priest. We pray to Christ, since He is our God.” Therefore, we must approach God in prayer with respect, trust and love.

As we see in St. Paul’s letter to the Ephesians, “With all prayer and supplication, pray at every opportunity in the spirit. To that end, be watchful with all perseverance and supplication for all the holy ones.” We surrender to God and pray with our whole heart. Our duty is to pray to God. To give and not give is in the hands of God. The Gospel of
St. Mathew says, “Your Heavenly Father gives good things to those who ask Him.”

In today’s Gospel, Jesus taught us how to pray; how to converse with God our Father with trust, gratitude, and joy just as He himself did.

The prayer Jesus teaches is short and surprisingly contains only a few elements. Honoring God’s name and praying for the arrival of God’s Kingdom are two duties we are asked to perform. Then comes what we need to ask for: food, forgiveness and deliverance from temptations. Regarding food, we ask God to give it day by day, not to hoard it in order to feel secure. The next items are forgiveness and deliverance from temptation. If not strong willed, one may fall into temptations of all sorts. In telling the parable of the persistent friend immediately after teaching the Lord’s Prayer, Jesus conveys the nature and importance of prayer.

In an impossible situation, persistently asking will produce results. What the man says from inside his house is a good reason for his friend to go back empty- handed, but he gets what he wants because he persists in asking. This parable is followed by the authoritative words of Jesus that those who ask will get, those who seek will find, and those who knock will find the door open. When we pray, God will give us what we need.

Let us ask Jesus to give us strength and grace to pray at all time in our lives. Amen