

# The power of prayer is paramount

**Sunday's Readings:** (R3) Luke 11:1-13. (R1) Genesis 18:20-32. (R2) Colossians 2:12-14.

One day Jesus was praying. When he had finished, one of the disciples asked him, "Lord, teach us to pray." Imagine! Jews prayed seven times a day. However the effect of prayer on Jesus moved one to ask him to teach them to pray like that. In answer Jesus gave them the Lord's Prayer.

It began with an acknowledgment of who God is. "Hallowed be your name." Then it included a request for daily needs, for sin to be forgiven, and for deliverance from the power of evil.

The very first petition was "Hallowed be thy name." At La Salette Our Lady wept because the people of France desecrated the name of God. She wept because of the terrible punishment such desecration was to bring upon France and Europe after 1846. Again at La Salette Our Lady said that if we prayed just the Our Father daily, in the morning and at night, it would be enough.

Though God knows our needs before we ask him, still he wants us to pray so that we may know our need for God. Then too we have free will and God will not violate that. As we would not enter a home unless invited, so Jesus wishes to be invited into our hearts: Prayer is such an invitation.

After giving a model prayer, Jesus



a word for sunday

By FATHER ALBERT SHAMON

taught one other thing about prayer, namely, that to be effective, prayer must be persistent. Jesus illustrated the power of perseverance in prayer with a parable. A man drops in at a friend's house unexpectedly in the middle of the night — in the East people traveled after the sun had set — and his host has no bread to serve him. So the host sneaks over to his friend's house and knocks on the door asking him to loan some bread.

At first he is ignored, but he keeps pounding. Finally, just to get rid of him, the friend gives him the bread. This was a parable of contrast. Jesus was saying if an unwilling person would answer a request because of persistence, how much more a willing Father will answer our requests if we are persistent.

"What father among you," Jesus concluded, "will give his son a snake if he asks for a fish, or hand him a scorpion if

he asks for an egg? If you, with all your sins, know how to give your children good things, how much more will the heavenly Father give (good things, like the Holy Spirit) to those who ask him."

So Jesus insisted: "Ask ... seek ... knock ..." be persistent! Delays are not denials. A little girl told her father that she was learning to swim and she prayed to God to help her pass her swim test. "It took him two weeks to answer my prayer," she said, "but he did it!" God answers all prayers, but in his own good time and way. The key is persistence and trust!

Finally, Jesus taught his disciples the power of prayer. Before his passion, he took Peter, James and John up a mountain to pray. As he prayed, he was transfigured before them. Prayer changed him. It can change us too.

When they came down the mountain after the Transfiguration, they found the other disciples frustrated because a father had brought his son to them. The son was possessed by the devil and they could not heal the boy. When Jesus arrived, the father immediately turned to him and Jesus healed the child. Later, the disciples asked Jesus why they could not drive out the devil. Jesus answered, "This kind can come out only through prayer." (Mark 9:29).

After the ascension of Jesus, King Herod Agrippa persecuted the church around 42 A.D. He executed James the

brother of John and imprisoned Peter, intending to execute him after the feast of the Passover. The disciples had no power to rescue him, but they had prayer power. The whole church prayed for Peter. The very night before his trial, God sent an angel and rescued Peter (Acts 12:1-17).

As Tennyson put it: "More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of."

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Father Shamon is administrator of St. Isaac Jogues Chapel, Fleming.

## Daily Readings

**Monday, July 27**  
Jeremiah 13:1-11; Matthew 13:31-35

**Tuesday, July 28**  
Jeremiah 14:17-22;  
Matthew 13:36-43

**Wednesday, July 29**  
Jeremiah 15:10, 16-21; John 11:19-27 or Luke 10:38-42

**Thursday, July 30**  
Jeremiah 18:1-6; Matthew 13:47-53

**Friday, July 31**  
Jeremiah 26:1-9; Matthew 13:54-58

**Saturday, August 1**  
Jeremiah 26:11-16, 24;  
Matthew 14:1-12

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