

A JIGSAW OF PRAYER
30th SUNDAY ORDINARY TIME – 23 OCTOBER 2022



THANK YOU

Thank you today for the creativity of some people in helping with the homily. Luke's Gospel gave many examples of prayer, prayer attitudes, experience of prayer. Then in the fifth book of the New Testament, The Acts of the Apostles, Luke showed how the early Christians prayed.

JIGSAW

Putting them together is a little like putting a jigsaw together. Thank you to a member of the parish who brought along the cover of the 1,000 piece she is working on.

How would we design a scene for a jigsaw about prayer?

QUILT

Another parish member has a wonderful quilt that she made, with many scenes in it. There are individual scenes and together they make a whole.

So too with prayer in Luke's Gospel and Acts of the Apostles. There are many prayer scenes and intentions, together making a whole picture.

Let us first look at the quilt and appreciate its creativity. Then ask ourselves how we could design a quilt of prayer from Lucan passages.

A BEADED CHRISTMAS SCENE

Another parish member has put together at a bead painting. Close up we cannot make sense of it. From a distance, it is clear and wonderful. So too with prayer. Sometimes we need to stand back what from what we are doing, and see the picture as God sees it.

Today's Gospel is one of many scenes in Luke's Gospel on prayer.

GOSPEL OF LUKE 18:9-14

In reflecting on the Gospel today, I've returned to what I shared three years ago. Jesus was on the journey to Jerusalem, and he found the time to speak about prayer and humility. Why?

Because prayer and humility are essential as followers of Jesus Christ.

On our journey of faith through life, we too, as Christians, need to be people of prayer and humility.

"He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous and regarded others with contempt"

Jesus contrasts two different responses, in such a way that we know the ending, before we come to it. The parable had begun by Jesus explaining that some people thought that they were righteous *dikaioi* (Gk. *δίκαιοι*) and yet they despised others. In the English language we find it difficult to describe the word for righteous. Sometimes we translate it as 'upright' or 'righteous'. 'Righteous' is a person who lives out their faithfulness to God in all they do.

"Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax-collector. The Pharisee, standing by himself, was praying thus, "God, I thank you that I am not like other people: thieves, rogues, adulterers, or even like this tax-collector. I fast twice a week; I give a tenth of all my income."

The Pharisee prayed to himself, glorifying himself. The second man, the Tax Collector, prayed humbly to God.

"But the tax-collector, standing far off, would not even look up to heaven, but was beating his breast and saying, "God, be merciful to me, a sinner!"

Only the Tax Collector goes away justified – *dedikaiomenos* – from the word *dikaios* (Gk. *δίκαιος*) for just, righteous.

Jesus explained:

"I tell you, this man went down to his home justified rather than the other; for all who exalt themselves will be humbled, but all who humble themselves will be exalted."

Humility should be our core, instead of an image, a mask or an illusion. Humility means more than acknowledging our weaknesses and faults like in today's parable. The Gospel as a whole, invites us to grow in our awareness of God in our lives, and of what our loving God has done for us, and does for us.

HUMILITY

Humility calls us to respond to our loving God in gratitude and praise and thanksgiving. Humility, inspired by God's inclusive love, calls us to love our neighbour, to live a 'righteous' relationship.

Humility, touched by God’s love,

- helps us understand our true identity as beloved.
- helps us know deeply that we belong to God.
- helps us see our mission in God’s creation.

Loved by God, we desire to love, to be in love, to share our love.

Jesus shows us throughout the Gospels how to love.

Sometimes in love, there are no words, and sometimes we are weak, needing guidance.

St Paul in the Letter to the Romans Chapter 8:26 shares about the Holy Spirit:

*“Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness;
For we do not know how to pray as we ought,
but that very Spirit intercedes with signs too deep for words.”*

May we live an open and humble response to wherever the Holy Spirit leads us.

May we find wholeness in the prayerful scenes of our lives.

Let us pray.

Father Gerry

Readings: <https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/102322.cfm>



Three examples used in the homily – jigsaw, beaded picture, and quilt – photograph taken Sunday 7.30am Mass