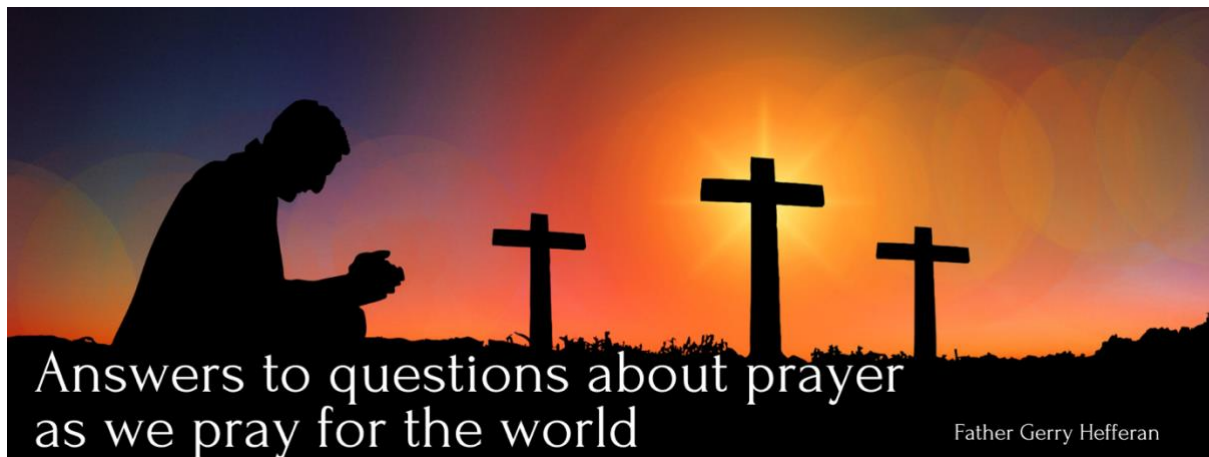


ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ABOUT PRAYER AS WE PRAY FOR THE WORLD

The Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe – 20 November 2022



This Sunday is named the Solemnity of *"Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe"*. It begins the last week of the church year. Some will remember it as *"Christ the King"*.

Pope Pius XI instituted this celebration in 1925, in a world

- still recovering from the devastation of the First World War of 1914-18,
- from the deaths caused by the Spanish Influenza,
- and concerns about developing trends.

As we commemorate this solemnity over this weekend, we can add the particular concerns we have about the world today.

Let us be guided by today's Gospel passage. We are invited to stand at the foot of the cross and to open our hearts to God as we encounter Jesus.

GOSPEL OF LUKE 23: 35-43

"And the people stood by, watching; but the leaders scoffed at him, saying, 'He saved others; let him save himself if he is the Messiah of God, his chosen one!' The soldiers also mocked him, coming up and offering him sour wine, and saying, 'If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!' There was also an inscription over him, 'This is the King of the Jews.' One of the criminals who were hanged there kept deriding him and saying, 'Are you not the Messiah? Save yourself and us!' But the other rebuked him, saying, 'Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? And we indeed have been condemned justly, for we are getting what we deserve for our deeds, but this man has done nothing wrong.' Then he said, 'Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.' He replied, 'Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise.' "

As we stand at the foot of the cross, let us pause and quietly identify and share our concerns about the world with God.

[pause]

PRAYER & POPE JOHN PAUL II

Thinking of prayer and those concerns, I think of a much-quoted saying of Pope John Paul II. In his [Address to the Meeting with the Young People of New Orleans 12 September 1987](#), Pope John Paul II gave insight into prayer. I quote a passage from his Message that has been used in different ways since that day.

“Prayer can truly change your life, for it turns your attention away from yourself and directs your mind and your heart towards the Lord. If we look only at ourselves, with our own limitations and sins, we quickly give way to sadness and discouragement. But if we keep our eyes fixed on the Lord, then our hearts are filled with hope, our minds are washed in the light of truth, and we come to know the fullness of the Gospel with all its promise and life.”

This is a prayer quote that I find very helpful, especially in recent challenging times. I shared it last Monday night at our Parish Pastoral Council meeting. Let us pause and reflect on the quote above.

[pause]

SEASON OF ADVENT

Next Saturday evening we begin the Season of Advent, preparing over four weeks for Christmas.

As we look back over the year, acknowledge the present, and prepare to begin again with Advent and Christmas, let us turn back once more for guidance in prayer, to the Pope’s Message to Youth in 1987.

EXPLORING SOME QUOTES FROM POPE JOHN PAUL II’S MESSAGE

We explore some quotes from his Message. May we reflect on them during the week ahead. I’ve added [a brief summary before each quote](#).

[Prayer is a communion with God](#)

“I would like to speak to you briefly about prayer, about communion with God, a communion that is deeply personal between ourselves and God. In prayer we express to God our feelings, our thoughts, our sentiments. We wish to love and be loved, to be understood and to understand. Only God loves us perfectly, with an everlasting love. In prayer, we open our hearts and our minds to this God of love. And it is prayer that makes us one with the Lord. Through prayer we come to share more deeply in God’s life and in his love.”

[Being constant and faithful in prayer enable our love for Jesus to grow in deep joy and peace.](#)

“If you really wish to follow Christ, if you want your love for him to grow and last, then you must be faithful to prayer. It is the key to the vitality of your life in Christ. Without prayer, your faith and love will die. If you are constant in daily prayer and in the Sunday celebration of Mass, your love for Jesus will increase. And your heart will know deep joy and peace, such as the world could never give.”

[How to pray](#)

“But many young people tell me that they do not know how to pray or they wonder if they are praying in a way that is correct.

Here again, you must look to the example of Christ. How did Jesus himself pray? First of all, we know that his prayer is marked by a spirit of joy and praise.

"Jesus rejoiced in the Holy Spirit and said:

‘I offer you praise, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth’.

In addition, he entrusted to the Church at the Last Supper the celebration of the Eucharist, which remains for all ages the most perfect means of offering to the Father glory and thanksgiving and praise.”

[Praying with intensity at times of suffering, great pain and struggle](#)

“Yet, there were also times of suffering when, in great pain and struggle, Jesus poured out his heart to God, seeking to find in his Father both comfort and support. For example, in the Garden of Gethsemane, when the inner struggle became even more difficult, then “in his anguish he prayed with all the greater intensity, and his sweat became like drops of blood falling to the ground” (Luc. 22, 44).

“He prayed with all the greater intensity” – what an example for us when we find life difficult, when we face a painful decision or when we struggle with temptation.

At times like these, Jesus prayed with all the greater intensity. We must do the same!”

[When it is difficult to pray](#)

“When it is difficult therefore to pray, the most important thing is not to stop praying, not to give up the effort.

At these times, turn to the Bible and to the Church’s liturgy.

Meditate on the life and teachings of Jesus as recorded in the Gospels.

Ponder the wisdom and counsel of the apostles and the challenging messages of the prophets.

Try to make your own the beautiful prayers of the Psalms.

You will find in the inspired word of God the spiritual food you need.

Above all, your soul will be refreshed when you take part wholeheartedly with the community in the celebration of the Eucharist, the Church’s greatest prayer.”

[Doing the will of God by doing what He tells you.](#)

[Prayer of thanksgiving, praise, adoration, attentive listening, asking for pardon and forgiveness](#)

“For the true success of our lives consists in knowing and doing the will of Jesus, in doing whatever Jesus tells us.

When you pray, you must realize that prayer is not just asking God for something or seeking special help, even though prayers of petition are true ways of praying. But prayer should also be characterized by thanksgiving and praise, by adoration and attentive listening, by asking God’s pardon and forgiveness. If you follow Jesus’ advice, and pray to God constantly, then you will learn to pray well. God himself will teach you.”

[Pray, being open to the Spirit who strengthens us to do good.](#)

[Gifted with joy and peace. Strong in hope and persevering in love.](#)

“Prayer also helps us to be open to the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of truth and love, the Spirit who was given to the Church so that she could fulfil her mission in the world. It is the Holy Spirit who gives us the strength to resist evil and do good, do our part in building up the Kingdom of God.

It is significant that the symbol of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost was tongues of fire. In fact, fire is often the symbol that the Bible uses to speak of the action of God in our lives. For the Holy Spirit truly inflames our hearts, engendering in them enthusiasm for the works of God.

And when we pray, the Holy Spirit stirs up within us love of God and love of our neighbour. The Holy Spirit brings us joy and peace.

The modern technological world can offer us many pleasures, many comforts of life. It can even offer us temporary escapes from life.

But what the world can never offer is lasting joy and peace.

These are the gifts which only the Holy Spirit can give.

And these are the gifts that I ask for you, so that you may be strong in hope and persevering in love... ”

The whole Message can be accessed at this [link](#).

Let us turn to our parish novena prayer, written by Minje and Clint, for their ordinations as deacons on November 18th and 26th.

The prayer is in our newsletter.

It is on our website prayer page at [Novena Prayer for Minje Kim & Clint McGoldrick](#)

Father Gerry

Readings: <https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/112022.cfm>