

*Scripture**Exodus 17:8-13; 2 Timothy 3:14-4:2; Luke 18:1-8*

Praying constantly for the same need can be frustrating. It's not that God doesn't hear us the first time, or the second time, or the hundredth time. Our Lord has every intention of answering our prayers. Knowing that he loves us beyond comprehension, patience and faithfulness are needed, believing that God's time is better than our time. Certainly Saint Monica could attest to this as she prayed seventeen years for the conversion of her son. And how were her prayers finally answered? The Church was given the great Saint Augustine. Certainly there has to be some discernment on our part when praying for the same need over and over; but surely praying for someone's conversion is a worthy prayer. Jesus' parable about the need to pray always is pertinent for each and every one of us. Saint Thérèse of Lisieux once said that no more than three minutes ever went by without her thinking of God. Even a passing thought of God is prayer because it's a constant reminder of our invitation to him to be ever-present in our lives. While praying seventeen years for someone's conversion might seem exhausting, in addition to the importance of the prayer itself, the person offering the prayer is also strengthening their personal union with the Lord. Even on the busiest of busy days, pausing frequently to acknowledge God's Presence is a beautiful prayer and takes only a matter of seconds to do. In the final verse Jesus asks the question: "When the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?" This question can be applied not only to Christ's Second Coming but also to our own personal last breath. Prayer requires faith which produces an ever-growing love and knowledge of Jesus. To pray often is to seek a stronger bond of love as well as a greater desire to know him very intimately. When the Son of Man comes will he find faith? When applied to our own final heartbeat, perhaps a more personal way of asking this question is: When I meet the Son of Man face-to-face, will I already be well-acquainted with him?



From the Catechism...

The Apostolic Tradition

75 "Christ the Lord, in whom the entire Revelation of the most high God is summed up, commanded the apostles to preach the Gospel, which had been promised beforehand by the prophets, and which he fulfilled in his own person and promulgated with his own lips. In preaching the Gospel, they were to communicate the gifts of God to all men. This Gospel was to be the source of all saving truth and moral discipline."

In the apostolic preaching...

76 In keeping with the Lord's command, the Gospel was handed on in two ways:

—*orally* "by the apostles who handed on, by the spoken word of their preaching, by the example they gave, by the institutions they established, what they themselves had received—whether from the lips of Christ, from his way of life and his works, or whether they had learned it at the prompting of the Holy Spirit";

—*in writing* "by those apostles and other men associated with the apostles who, under the inspiration of the same Holy Spirit, committed the message of salvation to writing."

... continued in apostolic succession

77 "In order that the full and living Gospel might always be preserved in the Church the apostles left bishops as their successors. They gave them 'their own position of teaching authority.'" Indeed, "the apostolic preaching, which is expressed in a special way in the inspired books, was to be preserved in a continuous line of succession until the end of time."

78 This living transmission, accomplished in the Holy Spirit, is called Tradition, since it is distinct from Sacred Scripture, though closely connected to it. Through Tradition, "the Church, in her doctrine, life, and worship perpetuates and transmits to every generation all that she herself is, all that she believes." "The sayings of the holy Fathers are a witness to the life-giving presence of this Tradition, showing how its riches are poured out in the practice and life of the Church, in her belief and her prayer."

79 The Father's self-communication made through his Word in the Holy Spirit, remains present and active in the Church: "God, who spoke in the past, continues to converse with the Spouse of his beloved Son. And the Holy Spirit, through whom the living voice of the Gospel rings out in the Church—and through her in the world—leads believers to the full truth, and makes the Word of Christ dwell in them in all its richness."

The Relationship Between Tradition and Sacred Scripture

One common source...

80 "Sacred Tradition and Sacred Scripture, then, are bound closely together and communicate one with the other. For both of them, flowing out from the same divine well-spring, come together in some fashion to form one thing and move towards the same goal." Each of them makes present and fruitful in the Church the mystery of Christ, who promised to remain with his own "always, to the close of the age."

... two distinct modes of transmission



81 "*Sacred Scripture* is the speech of God as it is put down in writing under the breath of the Holy Spirit." "And [Holy] *Tradition* transmits in its entirety the Word of God which has been entrusted to the apostles by Christ the Lord and the Holy Spirit. It transmits it to the successors of the apostles so that, enlightened by the Spirit of truth, they may faithfully preserve, expound, and spread it abroad by their preaching."

82 As a result the Church, to whom the transmission and interpretation of Revelation is entrusted, "does not derive her certainty about all revealed truths from the holy Scriptures alone. Both Scripture and Tradition must be accepted and honored with equal sentiments of devotion and reverence."

The senses of Scripture

115 According to an ancient tradition, one can distinguish between two *senses* of Scripture: the literal and the spiritual, the latter being subdivided into the allegorical, moral, and anagogical senses. The profound concordance of the four senses guarantees all its richness to the living reading of Scripture in the Church.

116 The *literal sense* is the meaning conveyed by the words of Scripture and discovered by exegesis, following the rules of sound interpretation: "All other senses of Sacred Scripture are based on the literal."

117 The *spiritual sense*. Thanks to the unity of God's plan, not only the text of Scripture but also the realities and events about which it speaks can be signs.

1. The *allegorical sense*. We can acquire a more profound understanding of events by recognizing their significance in Christ; thus the crossing of the Red Sea is a sign or type of Christ's victory and also of Christian Baptism.

2. The *moral sense*. The events reported in Scripture ought to lead us to act justly. As St. Paul says, they were written "for our instruction."

3. The *anagogical sense* (Greek: *anagoge*, "leading"). We can view realities and events in terms of their eternal significance, leading us toward our true homeland: thus the Church on earth is a sign of the heavenly Jerusalem.

The *Gospels* are the heart of all the Scriptures "because they are our principal source for the life and teaching of the Incarnate Word, our Savior."

126 We can distinguish three stages in the formation of the Gospels:

1. *The life and teaching of Jesus*. The Church holds firmly that the four Gospels, "whose historicity she unhesitatingly affirms, faithfully hand on what Jesus, the Son of God, while he lived among men, really did and taught for their eternal salvation, until the day when he was taken up."

2. *The oral tradition*. "For, after the ascension of the Lord, the apostles handed on to their hearers what he had said and done, but with that fuller understanding which they, instructed by the glorious events of Christ and enlightened by the Spirit of truth, now enjoyed."

3. *The written Gospels*. "The sacred authors, in writing the four Gospels, selected certain of the many elements which had been handed on, either orally or already in written form; others they synthesized or explained with an eye to the situation of the churches, while sustaining the form of preaching, but always in such a fashion that they have told us the honest truth about Jesus."



Word Wise

Theophany

The manifestation or appearance of God to man. Examples of theophanies include the burning bush that appeared before Moses, and when Jacob wrestled with the Angel of God.

Epiphany

A comprehension or perception of reality by means of a sudden intuitive realization. A moment of epiphany occurs when an outward occurrence causes a sudden inward change. For some, an event in nature, such as witnessing a solar eclipse can trigger a sudden realization that God must exist. In the Gospel of Matthew we read of the baptism of Christ and how heaven was opened and the Spirit of God descended upon Jesus and a voice was heard from above saying, "This is my Son, whom I love; with Him I am well pleased". This event, this Theophany, caused a sudden intuitive realization in all who were present that Jesus was indeed the one chosen and sent by God.

Revelation

This means that which is shown forth or made known. Scripture or the Bible is referred to as divine revelation because we believe that the Holy Spirit inspired and preserved the texts that have come down to us and for our sacred scriptures. It is also revelation in that it helps to make known or shows forth the divine and how God relates to the human and the human back to God.

Myth

From the Greek "mythos", is defined by secular sources as purely fictitious narrative involving supernatural person, events or actions, often embodying ideas about historical or natural events. Biblical myths are not fictions but symbolic and allegorical literature which reveals truths about the nature of God, humanity and the inter-relationship of the two. The embrace and understanding of biblical myth is rooted in the personal experience and relationship with the God who is revealed there in. They are not fictitious but are expressions of personal religious experience expressing the encounter with God.

Remember to read and reflect on the scripture readings for next week --- the 30th Sunday in Ordinary Time for Year C on p.171 of the Catechumen's Companion --- and do the suggestions for Journal Keeping.