**Homily for 17th.Sunday in Ordinary Time. (Yr.C) (July 24, 2022). Gen. 18:20-32, Col 2:12-14, Lk 11:1-13.**

**“Everyone who asks, receives; and the one who seeks, finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened”.**

The main themes of today’s Scripture readings are the power of intercessory prayer, and the necessity for persistence and perseverance in prayer, with trusting faith and boldness. The first reading, from the book of Genesis, gives us the model for intercessory prayer provided by Abraham in his dialogue with God. In the Gospel, after teaching a model prayer-“The Our Father”-, Jesus instructs his disciples to pray to God their Heavenly Father with the same boldness, daring, intimacy, conviction, persistence and perseverance, Abraham displayed, and the friend in need in the parable employed. He gives us the assurance that God will not be irritated by our requests or unwilling to meet them with generosity.

**Lesson:** We might remember hearing this reading when we were younger and thinking to ourselves, “God will give me anything? I just have to be persistent and ask enough times? This is amazing! I can get whatever I want! After all Jesus says: **“For, everyone who asks, receives; and the one who seeks, finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened”.** No preconditions, no qualification! Just pray persistently, very often, and annoyingly enough, and God will grant you your request. However, to this day many of us still haven’t received the Xbox we asked for in high school, and our family members/loved ones still died from cancer, and fatal accidents etc, even though we prayed hard for their healing and safety. Were we doing something wrong? And yet, even our holiest, most well-intentioned, loving and life-giving prayers often seem neglected and left unanswered by this loving God and Father of ours? In short, how can we reconcile this Gospel passage amid so many unanswered prayers?

**Life Message:** This parable does not mean that God is a reluctant giver. Rather it stresses the necessity of our persisting in prayer as the expression of our total dependence on God. Persevering in prayer helps us to purify our prayer, to make clear to ourselves our values and hopes, and to lead us to ask for what is really in our very best interests. St. Paul tells us to “pray without ceasing” (Rom.), “pray at all times” (Eph.), “be steadfast in prayer” (Col.), and “pray constantly” (Thess.). Jesus assures us, "Knock and the door shall be opened." However, the parable teaches us that prayer is not putting coins in a vending machine called “God” to get whatever we wish. We must not look upon God as a sort of genie who grants all our requests. God is our loving Father Who knows what to give, when to give and how to give. This includes not only our daily bread to satisfy our physical hunger but also “bread” to satisfy our spiritual hunger. **Prayer is a relationship -- an intimate, loving, caring, parent-child relationship.**

**Conclusion:** Modern Christians need to avoid giving lame reasons or excuses why we don’t pray. For example, a) We are too busy chasing money and wealth, that we don’t have time to pray. Indeed, often the first thing given up by a busy Christian is his prayer life. b) We don’t believe prayer does that much good, other than giving us psychological motivation to be better persons. People who use these and other excuses usually forget the fact that prayer is a conversation with God: listening to God speaking to us through the Bible and talking to God. Consequently, since our society concludes that prayer doesn’t work, it turns to promiscuity, violence and unhealthy addictions resulting in broken marriages, broken families, psychological problems, moral decadence, spiritual poverty, law-and-order problems, and prison populations. Yet, Prayer, is the sacred space where we can grow closer to God our Father, who loves us unconditionally, bathe in His grace, and conform our will to His, just like Abraham, our father in faith. Soren Kierkegaard, a Danish Theologian said**: “Prayer doesn’t change God, but it changes the one who prays.”** Therefore, as we pray for our needs and petitions, let’s also pray that our will are conformed to God’s, and that we can see and become God’s love, compassion, and presence in this world.