**“Persistence”**

Our 1st reading and the Gospel today point us to one word, ‘persistence.’ It point us to the fact that when it comes to our relationship with God, we should never give up on asking Him for our needs. Our persistence in praying to Him, means we rely on Him, It means we have faith in Him, and it means we know that He loves us beyond our wildest imagination.

In our first reading, we heard about Abraham the friend of God who had faith in God, interceded on behalf of the people of Sodom and Gomorrah. As we heard, Abraham persistently went on in boldness to bargain with God. From their dialogue, we found out that God would not condemn the innocent with the guilty. And that yes, faithful and God fearing people can somehow save the guilty.

Pope Pius XII in his writing on the “Church as the Mystical Body of Christ,” concerning this great gift of intercession from God wrote, ***“Deep mystery this subject of inexhaustible meditation, that the salvation of many depends on the prayers and voluntary penance which the Mystical Body of Jesus Christ offer for this intention”*** (*Mystical Corporis Christ, 46*)*.* On the surface, *w*hat the interaction between God and Abraham tells us is that by our prayers and goodness, we can be a savior to others.

When we hear about people who have done evil, people like the rapists, the drug dealers, the child abuser, we can do one of two things. We can condemn them and express our disgust about them or we can offer our prayers, with goodness for their sake and leave the judgment to God who is willing to spare an entire City for the sake of ten innocent people.

In our Gospel reading, one of the disciples who noticed that Jesus prayed privately all the time, approached Him and asked Him to teach them how to pray. Well as the saying goes, my sisters and brothers, you better be careful what you asked for. Jesus in teaching them how to pray, emphasized persistence in prayer.

Even, right in “Our Father,” Jesus said we are to pray **“Give us this day, our daily bread”.** When we reflect on these words, we find out that we are supposed to pray daily for our daily bread, should it be physical food or the Mystical Body and Blood of Christ in the Eucharist.

Jesus then followed the Our Father’s prayer with a parable about a persistent friend who asked another friend for loaves of bread for his unexpected guest. His persistence led to a positive response form the friend. Jesus then emphasized His message with three verbs **“ask,” “seek,”** and **“knock.”** They are all in the present tense, suggesting a repeated action not something done once and for all.

So, God encourages persistence in our petitions, not because God is deaf or uncaring about us, but because every prayer is transforming for us. The more humbly we petition God, the more we come to understand our dependency on him and learn how limited we are to do any good without God.

That is why Jesus frequently said, we must be like little children. You see, God the Father has made us His beloved children. He looks upon us somewhat in a similar way devoted parents look upon their little children when they ask for help or favors. The parents might have to exercise patience, but they are pleased when their children show their dependency on them.

The request of their children shows that they have faith in their parents that they know their parents have the power to help them. They know they themselves do not have this power. Secondly, by asking for favors, they believe that their parents love them dearly. They believe their parents would use their power to help them because they love them.

How much more will our heavenly Father give us what we request if it will not harm us, when we ask persistently! God indeed can do anything. He has the power that we do not have. Our prayers are an act of faith in God that He can deliver if what we ask for, is according to His will. His love for us far surpasses any human love for us.

My sisters and brothers, as we come to receive Jesus in the Eucharist, let us give thanks to Jesus for redeeming us so we can bask in the love of His Father.