



Sunday Reflection with Fr. Rafal



Dear Friends in Christ,

The **17th Sunday in Ordinary Time** invites us to think about how we talk to God. The readings remind us that prayer is not just about saying words. It is about trust, hope, and knowing that God is listening. Abraham speaks honestly with God. He asks questions and waits for answers. In the Gospel, Jesus teaches us the Our Father. He also tells us to keep asking, seeking, and knocking. God is not far away. He wants to hear from us and give us good gifts.

There was a father who was diagnosed to have a terminal lung cancer. He was given two months to live. So the children prayed to God to give their dad some years to live. Sad to say, the father died before the two months ended. The children were desperate and down because for them God did not answer their prayers. The mother told her children: "God answered your prayer but in a different way. He didn't want your dad to suffer long with terrible pains, so He took him away much earlier than expected."

Understanding and trusting God that whatever happens in life happens for a reason, that we may not understand it right away, sometimes requires patience, prayer and hope for the future. The need to pray, however, is not only for saints or priests or religious persons. It is for all of us. Even Jesus, who is God Himself and always in communion with the Father, He prayed. Mary, the Mother of God who is sinless, prayed. Our Muslim brothers and sisters also pray five times in a day and so with Hindus. How much more for us who claim to be followers of Christ and are baptized Christians? A Christian without Christ is like a vehicle without brake and accelerator. He could not move or stop. If we take the word 'CHRIST' from the word 'CHRISTIAN', the remaining letters are 'IAN' which means I Am Nothing. In other words, without Christ, I Am Nothing at all.

There are occasions when prayer becomes the easiest thing to make excuses with. We have so many reasons and excuses for not praying and faithful into it. When we are too busy with our work at the office or at home, we cancel or delete from the planned schedule our prayer time or our bible reading schedule. Even during Sunday, a day usually spent for contemplation, praying and re-evaluation, we sometimes change it into a worldly celebration or affairs. And yet, Sunday is the Lord's Day; we make it as a consumers' day. We may probably find the Mass as the same, a repetitious one. It is routinely done, boring and mechanical. We cannot find meaning and nourishment in the celebration.

In prayer, we do not expect God to answer us in the way we want but in the way God wants because He knows what is best for us. We give Him the freedom to answer 'yes' or 'no' or 'wait'. For if we want to get what we want every time we pray, we are not praying to God but to ourselves. We pray to Him because of our vested interests and personal needs.

Have a Blessed Sunday!

Fr. Rafal Ligenza.

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