

Ordinary 17C - 2022

Humor: Persistence in Prayer

Paul Harvey told about a 3-year-old boy who went to the grocery store with his mother. Before they entered she had certain instructions for the little tike: "Now you're not going to get any chocolate chip cookies, so don't even ask." She put him in the child's seat and off they went up and down the aisles. He was doing just fine until they came to the cookie section. Seeing the chocolate chip cookies he said, "Mom, can I have some chocolate chip cookies?" She said, "I told you not even to ask. You're not going to get any at all." They continued down the aisles, but in their search for certain items she had to back track and they ended up in the cookie aisle again. "Mom, can I please have some chocolate chip cookies?" She said, "I told you that you can't have any. Now sit down and be quiet." Finally, they arrived at the checkout. The little boy sensed that the end was in sight, that this might be his last chance. He stood up on the seat and shouted in his loudest voice, "In the name of Jesus, may I have some chocolate chip cookies?" Everyone in the checkout lanes laughed and applauded. Do you think the little boy got his cookies? You bet! The other shoppers moved by his daring pooled their resources. The little boy and his mother left with 23 boxes of chocolate chip cookies. (from Paul Harvey Commentary and News)

Prayer to the Outside Observer

Father Barry Foster, a priest in Dublin, Ireland, parked his car on a rather steep slope close to his church. His little cairn terrier was lying on the rear seat and could not be seen by anyone outside the vehicle. Father Foster got out of the car and turned to lock the door with his usual parting command to the dog. "Stay!" he ordered loudly, to an apparently empty car. "Stay!" An elderly man was watching the performance with amused interest. Grinning, he suggested, "Why don't you just try putting on the emergency brake?" Our subject today is prayer. To the mind of the unbeliever, watching someone pray is the equal of watching someone say "Stay," to their automobile fully expecting it to obey. To the unbeliever prayer is an exercise in futility. But to the believer, prayer is the most powerful and the most reliable force in the world today. (by King Duncan from *Collected Sermons*, www.Sermons.com)

Prayer and Forgiveness

We cannot come to God in honest prayer when we have not forgiven one another transgressions: A young boy saw a pack of cigarettes on the ground and decided to try them. He went to a field near his home and, after several fumbling attempts, got one to light up. It didn't taste good; indeed, it burned his throat and made him cough. But it made him feel very grown up. Then he saw his father coming. Quickly he put the cigarette behind his back and tried to be casual. Desperate to divert his father's attention. The young Boy pointed to a nearby billboard advertising the circus. "Can we go, Dad? Please, let's go when it comes to town." The father quietly but firmly replied, "Son, never make a petition while at the same time trying to hide a smoldering disobedience."

First Lesson in Prayer

A little boy was sitting next to a grizzled holy man seated beside the Ganghes River. "Will you teach me to pray?" the boy asked. "Are you sure that you want to learn?" the holy man asked? "Yes, of course." With that the holy man grabbed the boy's neck and plunged his head into the water. He held them there while the boy kicked and screamed and tried to get away. Finally, after an interminable period the holy man let the boy out of the water. "What was that?" the boy asked. "That was your first lesson in prayer. When you long for God the way that you longed to breathe, then you will be able to pray." (Unknown)

We Do Not Want God

On a subway platform in one of our Eastern states there was a large printed sign that said "God Answers Prayer." Some experienced person had scrawled across the bottom underneath the printed letters these words: "Sometimes the answer is NO!" This is what we have to deal with in any discussion of prayer. Someone says, "I felt the need of God. I prayed for something to happen, and it didn't. Prayer failed." No, Sir. I suggest that **you did not want God - you wanted God to do something**, and that's different. You have missed the purpose of prayer: to be in harmony with God, to have a sense of God's presence; to feel the assurance that God is in, around and greater than any circumstance; that, come what may, we belong to him and underneath are the everlasting arms. Prayer is not a trading post, but a line of communication. (by Carveth Mitchell from *The Sign in the Subway*, CSS Publishing Company)