



Intercessions Versus Petitions



Friday Growth Formation

14th August 2020

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Pen & Paper Exercise



- Write a prayer request for yourself
- Write a prayer for someone you want to pray for
- Later at the Benediction, during the short quiet time, bring these 2 prayer requests into God's Presence

Is this Petition or Intercession?

*“Lord Jesus, Christ,
Son of the Living God,
have mercy on me,
a sinner”*



Divine Office



Before **beginning** the Divine Office prayer (prayer of the Church), we start by saying,
“O God come to our aid. O Lord make haste to help me.”

We know that without God’s help and initiative, we find difficulty bringing ourselves to daily prayer. We acknowledge that we need God’s help.

Petition



- The Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC 2629-2630) speaks of types of petitions
- The New Testament has a rich vocabulary, is rich in shades of meaning (ask, beseech, invoke, entreat, cry out).
- By petition, we admit that we do not have control of our lives. We are sinners who, by asking, turn back to God



Petition



- However the New Testament lacks the prayers of lamentation (so frequent in the Old Testament) because the Church is kept afloat with hope in Christ's Resurrection.
- Christian petition is a *“groaning,”* a *“labour pain”* while we *“await the redemption of our bodies”* (Romans 8:22-24)
- Our prayer is in the Holy Spirit who *“intercedes for us with sighs too deep for words”* (Romans 8:26)



Prayers



- We recognize intercession and petition as types of prayer
- Do we understand the difference between them?
- Petition is understood to mean requests on our own behalf, and intercession is making requests on behalf of others

Prayers



- Both are valid prayers and we accept them. But do those with a ministry in prayer refer to themselves as petitioners or intercessors?
- To be an **intercessor** you must be willing to look beyond your own needs and concerns and consider those of others to be important enough to **engage your time, energy, and spiritual passion**, and in this manner **love others as they love themselves**.



Types of Petition (ccc 2631-2633)

- Our first petition must be for the **forgiveness of sins**. *“God be merciful to me a sinner”* (Lk 18:13)
- This petition brings us back into **communion with God and one another**

**PRAYER DOES
NOT BRING GOD
DOWN TO US,
BUT BRINGS US
UP TO HIM**



Types of Petition (ccc 2631-2633)

- Christian petition must centre on the Kingdom to come
- We pray for the Kingdom and whatever is necessary to cooperate with its coming
- Paul showed a solicitude for all the churches in his prayer
- Every need is an object of petition
- Christ is glorified by what we ask for in His name (John 14:13). James and Paul tell us to pray always

Types of Petition (ccc 2631-2633)

- A **prayer of petition** is a request to God that asks Him to fulfil a need
- By **prayer of petition**, **Catholics** acknowledge their dependence on God





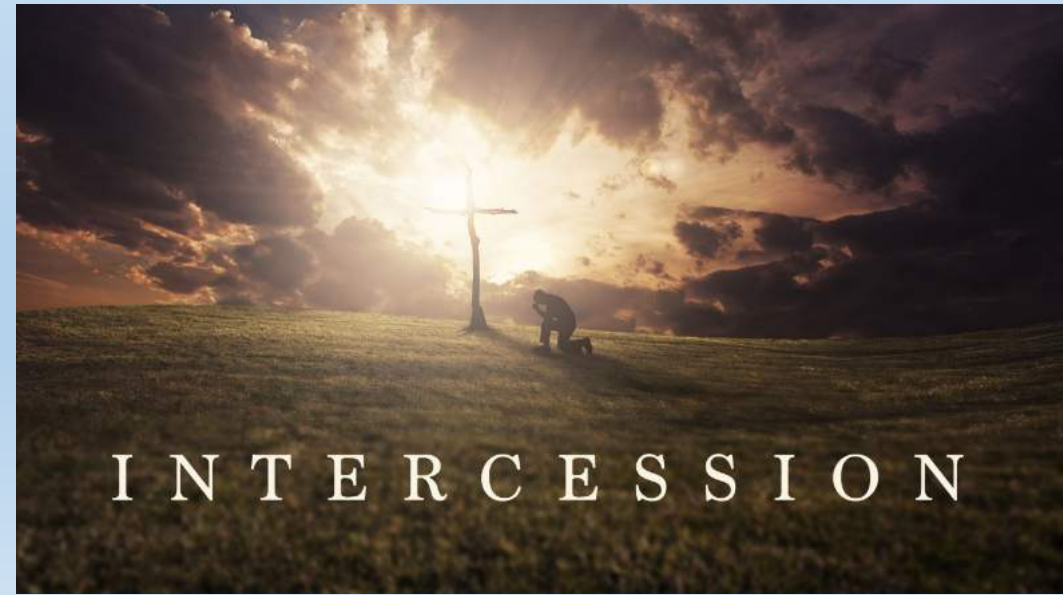
Act of Petition (Let us pray silently)

Give me yourself, O God, give yourself to me. Behold I love you, and if my love is too weak a thing, grant me to love you more strongly. I cannot measure my love to know how much it falls short of being sufficient, but let my soul hasten to your embrace and never be turned away until it is hidden in the secret shelter of Your Presence. This only do I know, that it is not good for me when you are not with me, when you are only outside me. I want you in my very self. All the plenty in the world which is not my God is utter want. Amen.

- Saint Augustine of Hippo

Interceding For Others (CCC 2634-2636)

- We imitate Jesus who **“always lives to make intercession.”** (Hebrews 7:25)
- The Spirit *“himself intercedes for the saints according to God’s Will.”* (Romans 8:26-27)



Interceding For Others (ccc 2634-2636)

- Interceding for others (as Abraham did) shows a heart attuned to God's mercy
- Christians participate in Christ's intercession by praying for the interests of others, even of enemies
- Every Sunday we have the Prayer of the Faithful (POF) which includes prayers of intercession for the church, the world, and God's people



Interceding For Others (ccc 2634-2636)

- Paul asked the Ephesian community to “*pray at every opportunity in the Spirit*” and to make “*supplications for all the holy ones*” (Ephesians 6:18)
- He asked for intercession, “*for all men, for kings, and all in high positions*” (1 Timothy 2:1)



Prayer and faith
will do what
NO POWER ON EARTH
can accomplish.



Interceding For Others (ccc 2634-2636)

- The General Instruction of the Roman Missal states: In the **General Intercessions** or the **Prayer of the Faithful**, the people respond in a certain way to the Word of God which they have welcomed in faith and, exercising the office of their baptismal priesthood, offer **prayers** to God for the salvation of all



Interceding For Others (ccc 2634-2636)

- Intercession is the act of intervening on another's behalf. Thus an intercessory prayer is a prayer said on behalf of someone else
- It can be a prayer for a friend, a family member or for someone in need
- One of the earliest examples of intercessory prayers comes from the Book of Genesis when Abraham pleaded with God for the deliverance of the people of Sodom

Interceding For Others (ccc 2634-2636)

- The scriptures describe **Intercessory** prayers as building bridges between God and those we are praying for. This means **filling a gap** between the person who needs the prayer but unable to pray to our Heavenly Father
- For the Catholic faith in particular, when making a prayer for intercession we ask the saints to pray on our behalf, and sometimes we pray for the dead to help them get into Heaven



Interceding For Others (ccc 2634-2636)

- The prophet Daniel offered a great prayer of intercession, recorded in Daniel 9:4-19
- He states, “*We have sinned*” and speaks of “*our kings ... princes ... fathers ... people*”
- In verse 16, he prays, “*O Lord ... turn away your anger and your wrath from Jerusalem.*”
- Though he identifies himself with the group, his prayer is an intercessory one for God’s blessing on His entire people





Intercessory Prayer (Let us pray silently)

We beg you, Father, to help and protect us. Save the oppressed. Pity the insignificant. Raise the fallen. Avail yourself to the needy. Heal the sick. Bring back those of your people who have gone astray. Feed the hungry. Lift up the weak. Take off the prisoners' chains. May all nations come to know that you alone are God, that Jesus is your Son, and that we are your people, the sheep of your pasture. Amen!

- Pope St. Clement of Rome

A 'Will' to Learn

(CCC 2634-2636)

could you
not watch
with Me
one hour?

Matthew 26:40



- Prayer is not just a spontaneous interior outpouring - A will to pray is required
- Knowing what Scripture says about prayer is not enough
- We learn how to pray from the Spirit according to the Church's living Traditions
- By this Christian prayer Tradition, faith is shaped and grows

A 'Will' to Learn (ccc 2634-2636)

- It is common to run across Bible verses that seem to use two or three different words to describe the same thing
- Take as an example Philippians 4:6, which says to offer “*prayer and petition*” and to “*present your requests to God*”

Ask for What
You Need

-GOD'S GOT YOU COVERED-



A 'Will' to Learn

(CCC 2634-2636)



- Few ways of saying what seems to be the same thing
- It is often in these nuances, such as in distinguishing between intercession and petition, that we **gain deeper insight** into our **relationship with God** and the best manner in which to approach God

Christ's Earnest Prayer

- Prayers of petition then involve drawing near to God for personal aid
- Christ's earnest prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane the night before His crucifixion
- ***“Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done.”*** (Luke 22:42)





What is our Prayer like?



PRAY &
DON'T
GIVE UP

Luke 18:1

- As we engage in both prayers of **intercession** and **petition**, have we sometimes felt disillusioned because we do not get results or answers or sometimes God seemed distant and silent?



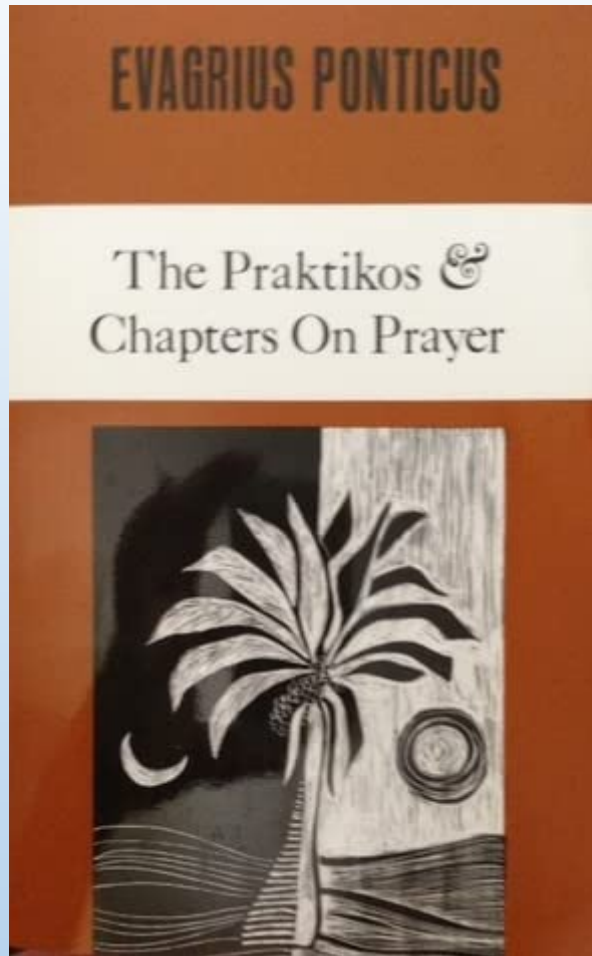
Problems in Prayer



WE HAVE TO PRAY
WITH OUR EYES ON
GOD, NOT ON THE
DIFFICULTIES

St. James (4:1-10) notes many problems in prayer:

- We ask wrongly, to spend it on our passions (4:3)
- We are “adulterers,” asking with divided hearts (4:4)
- We don't realize that God jealously yearns for our spirit (4:5) and we will only be heard if we have the Spirit's desires



Mystics on Prayer

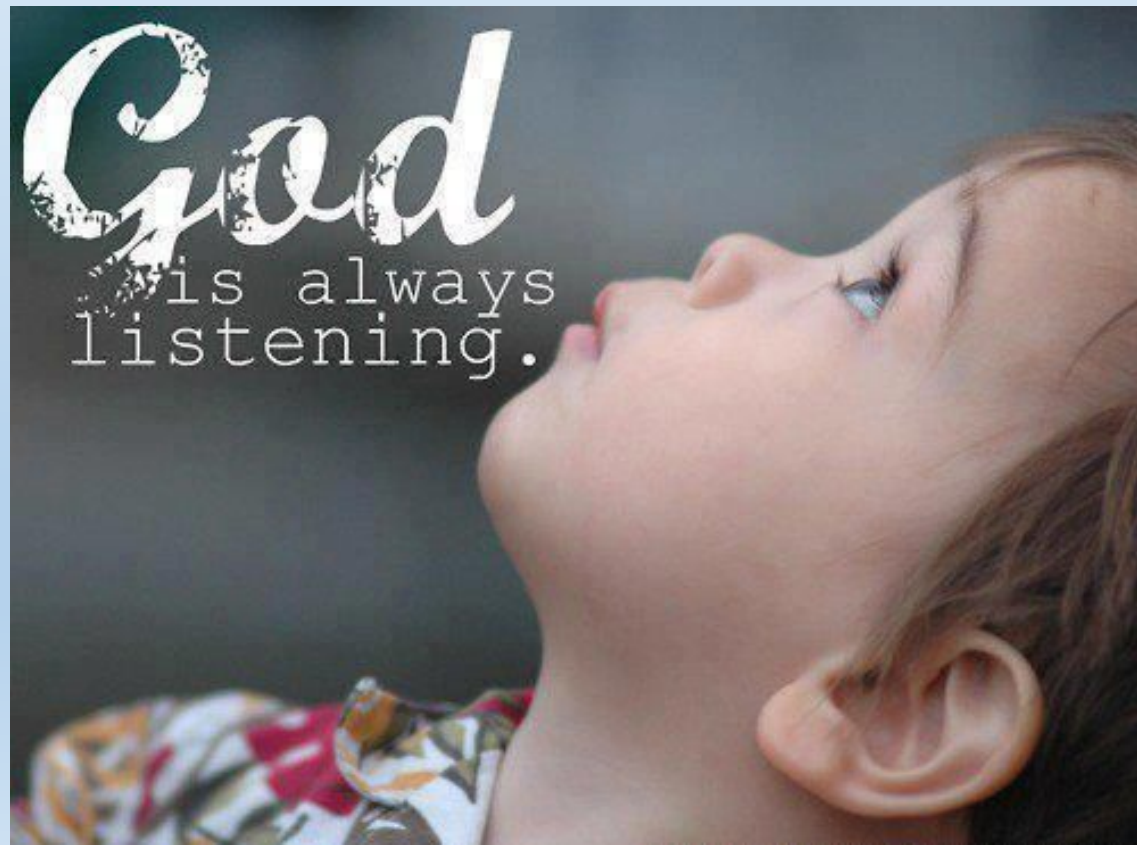
“Don't be troubled
if you do not immediately receive.
God desires to do something
even greater for you,
while you cling to him in prayer”
(Evagrius Ponticus)

“God wills that we may be able to
receive what He is prepared to give”

(St. Augustine)

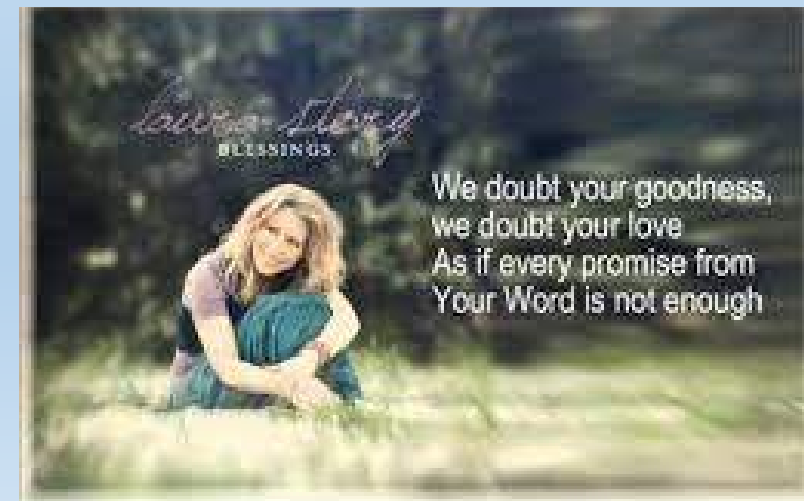
God listens...

It doesn't matter if whether if it's a prayer of petition or intercession – For God listens to the prayer of the poor ones.



Reflection with Blessings Song...

Let us keep a moment of silence as **we listen to this song** and recognise in it – our sighs and groans, for ourselves, for God's Kingdom to come, for those suffering, for an end to the Pandemic, for peace, for conversion...the list goes on.




The Rabbi's Forest, Fire and Prayer

Intent of this Hasidic Story

An old Jewish story tells us that when some calamity was threatening his people, the Rabbi, used to get to a certain '**Holy Place**' in the forest, light a '**Sacred Fire**' and say a '**Special Prayer**'. Thus, every time the calamity was averted.





Some years later, when the community leader died and there was trouble, there was no Rabbi, and no Rabbi's son and just a friend of the Rabbi's son.

He went again into that '**Holy Place**' in the forest and said: "God, Lord of the universe, I still know the '**Holy Place**', in this forest, but I do not know how to light the '**Sacred Fire**' and forgot that '**Special Prayer**'.





Yet, Oh, Lord, have pity on us and save your people.”
This time too, the tragedy was averted.

Finally, the day came when there was no Rabbi, no
Rabbi’s son and no friend of the Rabbi’s son. But just a
desperate Jew praying.





Sitting at home, the Jew prayed to God from the depth of his heart: “Sorry, Lord, I do not know that ‘**Holy Place**’ in the forest, I cannot light the ‘**Sacred Fire**’, and worst of all, I even forgot that ‘**Special, Prayer**’. Yet O God, have pity on us and deliver us from danger.” And God listened to him and the calamity was averted again. *(A Hasidic Story)*



Reflect on The Story of the Rabbi

Reflection And Discussion

1. Share how you understand the story and what lessons can be drawn from it.
2. Share your own personal thoughts and reflections.
3. Discuss if time permits.

