

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke.

*Ask, and it will be given to you.*

Once Jesus was in a certain place praying, and when he had finished, one of his disciples said, 'Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples.' He said to them, 'Say this when you pray:

"Father, may your name be held holy, your kingdom come; give us each day our daily bread, and forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive each one who is in debt to us.

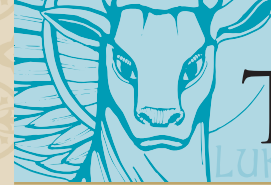
And do not put us to the test."

He also said to them, 'Suppose one of you has a friend and goes to him in the middle of the night to say, "My friend, lend me three loaves because a friend of mine on his travels has just arrived at my house and I have nothing to offer him"; and the man answers from inside the house, "Do not bother me. The door is bolted now, and my children and I are in bed; I cannot get up to give it to you." I tell you, if the man does not get up and give it him for friendship's sake, persistence will be enough to make him get up and give his friend all he wants.

'So I say to you: Ask, and it will be given to you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened to you. For the one who asks always receives; the one who searches always finds; the one who knocks will always have the door opened to him. What father among you would hand his son a stone when he asked for bread? Or hand him a snake instead of a fish? Or hand him a scorpion if he asked for an egg? If you then, who are evil, know how to give your children what is good, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!'

### ■ The Gospel of the Lord.

# Breaking Open the Word



# THE SAVING WORD

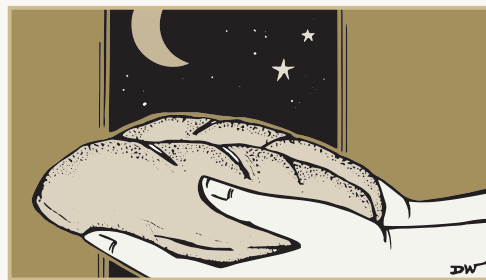
SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME / C

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## FOUNDATION OF PRAYER

Like the disciples we find ourselves asking, 'Lord, teach us to pray'. All people of faith are called to pray but how are we to pray? What attitudes are appropriate? Should we be fearful of the living God or trusting and open? The readings for today provide us with some useful orientations. Abraham's pleading for Sodom and Gomorrah is not simply a theoretical concern. Abraham is pleading for the survival of Lot and his family, though he does not mention them specifically. He is prepared to push God's mercy to the limit to save his relatives. His trust in God and his courageous persistence in prayer are rewarded. Similarly, Jesus teaches the disciples that such persistence is the very stuff of the life of faith. Those who seek will find, to those who knock the door will be opened. Abraham knew that the living God was a God of justice and mercy; Jesus goes further to show that the living God is also to be seen as a loving parent, a tireless provider, to be addressed as our Father.

Paul knew that we can have this sort of confidence in God because of what had come about through Jesus' death. Our baptism enables us to share in his saving death and resurrection. On the cross, Jesus has already graciously paid the debt our sin would normally require us to pay. Because of this gift, we can approach God with confidence and trust because the burden of our past has already been taken up by Jesus.



Christopher Monaghan CP

## FIRST READING

Gen 18:20-32

A reading from the book of Genesis

*Lord, do not be angry if I speak.*

The Lord said, 'How great an outcry there is against Sodom and Gomorrah! How grievous is their sin! I propose to go down and see whether or not they have done all that is alleged in the outcry against them that has come up to me. I am determined to know.'

The men left there and went to Sodom while Abraham remained standing before the Lord. Approaching him he said, 'Are you really going to destroy the just man with the sinner? Perhaps there are fifty just men in the town. Will you really overwhelm them, will you not spare the place for the fifty just men in it? Do not think of doing such a thing: to kill the just man with the sinner, treating just and sinner alike! Do not think of it! Will the judge of the whole earth not administer justice?' The Lord replied, 'If at Sodom I find fifty just men in the town, I will spare the whole place because of them.'

Abraham replied, 'I am bold indeed to speak like this to my Lord, I who am dust and ashes. But perhaps the fifty just men lack five: will you destroy the whole city for five?' 'No', he replied, 'I will not destroy it if I find forty-five just men there.' Again Abraham said to him, 'Perhaps there will only be forty there.' 'I will not do it' he replied 'for the sake of the forty.'

Abraham said, 'I trust my Lord will not be angry, but give me leave to speak: perhaps there will only be thirty there.' 'I will not do it' he replied 'if I find thirty there.' He said, 'I am bold indeed to speak like this, but perhaps there will only be twenty there.' 'I will not destroy it' he replied 'for the sake of the twenty.' He said, 'I trust my Lord will not be angry if I speak once more: perhaps there will only be ten.' 'I will not destroy it' he replied 'for the sake of the ten.'

### ■ The word of the Lord.

## RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Ps 137:1-3, 6-8. R. v. 3

**R. Lord, on the day I called for help, you answered me.**

1. I thank you, Lord, with all my heart, / you have heard the words of my mouth. / Before the angels I will bless you. / I will adore before your holy temple. **R.**

2. I thank you for your faithfulness and love / which excel all we ever knew of you. / On the day I called, you answered; / you increased the strength of my soul. **R.**

3. The Lord is high yet he looks on the lowly / and the haughty he knows from afar. / Though I walk in the midst of affliction / you give me life and frustrate my foes. **R.**

4. You stretch out your hand and save me, / your hand will do all things for me. / Your love, O Lord, is eternal, / discard not the work of your hands. **R.**

## SECOND READING

Col 2:12-14

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Colossians

*He has made you alive with Christ for he has forgiven all our sins.*

You have been buried with Christ, when you were baptised; and by baptism, too, you have been raised up with him through your belief in the power of God who raised him from the dead. You were dead, because you were sinners and had not been circumcised: he has brought you to life with him, he has forgiven us all our sins.

He has overridden the Law, and cancelled every record of the debt that we had to pay; he has done away with it by nailing it to the cross.

### ■ The word of the Lord.

## GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Rom 8:15

Alleluia, alleluia!

**You have received the Spirit which makes us God's children, and in that Spirit we call God our Father. Alleluia!**

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