Spirituality
Pencil Preaching



by Pat Marrin

View Author Profile
patrickjmarrin@gmail.com.

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February 27, 2023
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“This is how you are to pray” (Matt 6:9).

Is 55:10-11; Mt 6:7-15

When his disciples asked Jesus to teach them to pray, he did not just give them a formula of words; he invited them to share his own relationship with his *Abba.*

They had seen him in prayer, knew that when he went apart, raised his face to the sky and held his arms up, he was experiencing an intimate encounter with God. Like a child reaching for a loving parent, Jesus was being raised and embraced. Jesus invites them to stand with him, lift up their minds, hearts, souls and bodies with the same intimate assurance that they are in the loving gaze of God. Prayer is not just negotiation; it is a relationship that changes us by opening our minds and hearts.

When we pray with Jesus, our brother, we are exercising our essential dignity as children of God. By our baptism we became dwelling places of the Trinity, called by the Creator into existence, named and loved eternally. We are incorporated into the risen body of Christ, becoming his presence in the world. We are flooded with light and wisdom by the Holy Spirit. We are now the family of God, and when together we pray, God hears our voices with the voice of Jesus.

The petitions of the “Our Father” align us with God’s will, which enables us to grow in the nourishment of the Eucharist, our daily bread, gives us the power to offer and seek forgiveness in an ongoing act of redemption that reaches beyond us to everyone we touch. We are encouraged not to be afraid, for God will always be with us, even in trial and temptation.

The prayer of Jesus is a continuous and creative exchange between God and humanity, divine and human. To know it by heart and to say it often is to uncover the mystery of God and of ourselves as part of the Family of God. This is home base for our journey of Lent, the reference point for our confidence that we are loved and empowered to love one another. Beyond all our petitions, that is Jesus’ answer to our request, “Teach us to pray.”