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## Food For Thought and Spiritual Growth:

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**The Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time**  
(Luke 11: 1-13)

### CONNECTING THE GOSPEL:

To the first reading: Abraham's persistence may not have obtained the ultimate deliverance of Sodom and Gomorrah, but it did reveal to Abraham something about God the One who is compassionate and just.

To our experience: We often use prayer as an opportunity to tell God what we need. Prayer is also the opportunity God takes to reveal to us who God is (Father) and how God acts toward us (with compassion and care.)

**TO THE POINT:** In this gospel Jesus "teach[es] us to pray." Most important, He teaches us to whom we pray; God who is a generous and caring Father. He also teaches us for what we should pray: not just for immediate needs ("daily bread") but, more important, for ultimate needs, the furthering of God's kingdom, the gift of forgiveness, and protection from anything that would take us from God. It is persistence in prayer that brings us deeper into our relationship with God and opens us to receive these "good gifts" God offers us.

### QUESTIONS TO PONDER AND DISCUSS:

#### **The Parish Community:**

*-Jesus' Our Father reveals God as...It discloses my deepest self as...It characterizes my relationship with God as...*

*-What is most comforting about praying is...most difficult is...*

*-The part "persistence" plays in my prayer life is...*

#### **Hospitality Ministers:**

*-My hospitality helps create an environment conducive for prayer when I...*

#### **Parish Music Ministers:**

*-My music ministry helps me pray by...My music ministry is prayer when...*

#### **Altar Ministers:**

*-My serving others is prayer when...My service aids the prayer of others by...*

#### **Lectors:**

*-The fruit of remaining persistent with God's word is...The way my proclamation shares that fruit with the assembly is...*

#### **Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion:**

*-The way I give "daily bread" to my family, neighbors, coworkers, those who are infirm, etc., are...*

### About Liturgy:

#### **Liturgy as prayer:**

We call liturgy a celebration, a ritual act, the communal worship of the people. We process during liturgy, sing, acclaim, proclaim. Liturgy is filled with many different kinds of activities. This Sunday's gospel challenges us to consider whether we approach *liturgy* as prayer. True, we pray the Our Father, just before Communion, the prayer Jesus taught us and we rightly think of its preeminence. At the same time we cannot forget that *all* of liturgy is prayer, from the beginning sign of the cross to the concluding blessing. A prayerful attitude should mark how we celebrate liturgy.

Why is it important to insist that liturgy is prayer?

An attitude of prayer keeps us focused on the relationship we share with God. It helps us realize that we celebrate liturgy not because of any power we have but because God invites us and gives us the Spirit who enables us to respond with praise and thanksgiving.

True, different kinds of prayer mark our liturgies. Sometimes we pray aloud together, such as during the responsorial psalm and the Our Father. Sometimes we are given silent time to very personally pour out our hearts to God in prayer, such as in the quiet time after the readings and after Communion. Sometimes we actively listen as another voices our prayer, such as during the presidential prayers (opening prayer, prayer over the gifts, prayer after Communion) and the Eucharistic prayer. Surely our acclaiming and hymn singing is also prayer. But for all these (and other) types of prayer during Mass, the real challenge is to make the *whole Mass* the *one prayer* of the one Body of Christ.

[Living Word, 2010]