

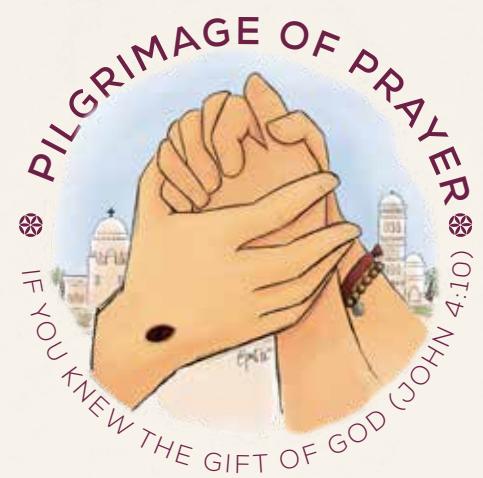
Day 14

Prayer of Petition & Intercession

For Personal Reflection & Prayer

- What do I pray for the most?
- When was the last time I prayed for the extension of God's Kingdom, for the mission of the Body of Christ, for what is necessary for people to recognize and receive it?

Take these considerations to the Lord in prayer, asking for light and strength.



Offer a prayer inspired by the words of Scripture:

*I urge you brothers, by our Lord Jesus Christ,
And by the love of the Spirit,
to join me in the struggle by your prayers
to God on my behalf.*

Psalm 24: 9-10

Pope Benedict XVI on Intercession

Referring to Genesis 18: "The smaller the number becomes, the greater God's mercy is shown to be. He patiently listens to the prayer, he hears it and repeats at each supplication: "I will spare... I will not destroy... I will not do it" (cf. vv. 26,28, 29, 30, 31, 32). Thus, through Abraham's intercession, Sodom can be saved if there are even only 10 innocent people in it. This is the power of prayer. For through intercession, the prayer to God for the salvation of others, the desire for salvation which God nourishes for sinful man is demonstrated and expressed. Evil, in fact, cannot be accepted, it must be identified and destroyed through punishment: The destruction of Sodom had exactly this function.



Yet the Lord does not want the wicked to die, but rather that they convert and live (cf. Ez 18:23; 33:11); his desire is always to forgive, to save, to give life, to transform evil into good. Well, it is this divine desire itself which becomes in prayer the desire of the human being and is expressed through the words of intercession.

With his entreaty, Abraham is lending his voice and also his heart, to the divine will. God's desire is for mercy and love as well as his wish to save; and this desire of God found in Abraham and in his prayer the possibility of being revealed concretely in human history, in order to be present wherever there is a need for grace. By voicing this prayer, Abraham was giving a voice to what God wanted, which was not to destroy Sodom but to save it, to give life to the converted sinner.

This is what the Lord desires and his dialogue with Abraham is a prolonged and unequivocal demonstration of his merciful love. The need to find enough righteous people in the city decreases and in the end 10 were to be enough to save the entire population. The reason why Abraham stops at 10 is not given in the text. Perhaps it is a figure that indicates a minimum community nucleus (still today, 10 people are the necessary quorum for public Jewish prayer). However, this is a small number, a tiny particle of goodness with which to start in order to save the rest from a great evil.

However, not even 10 just people were to be found in Sodom and Gomorrah so the cities were destroyed; a destruction paradoxically deemed necessary by the prayer of Abraham's intercession itself. Because that very prayer revealed the saving will of God: the Lord was prepared to forgive, he wanted to forgive but the cities were locked into a totalizing and paralyzing evil, without even a few innocents from whom to start in order to turn evil into good.

This is the very path to salvation that Abraham too was asking for: being saved does not mean merely escaping punishment but being delivered from the evil that dwells within us. It is not punishment that must be eliminated but sin, the rejection of God and of love which already bears the punishment in itself.

https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/audiences/2011/documents/hf_ben-xvi_aud_20110518.html

