



OUR LADY
OF LOURDES
PARISH TUJUNGA 1920-2020

Family ~ Community ~ Church

July 30, 2023

Pastor

Fr. Rolly Astudillo
818-352-3218 x 103
✉frrolly106@gmail.com

Deacons

Dn. Mar Enriquez
818-802-1639
✉marciano.enriquez@yahoo.com

Dn. Ramon Villasenor
818-352-3218
✉rvillasenor10@yahoo.com

In Residence

Fr. Jiwan Kim
✉jiwankim@yahoo.com

Mass Schedule

Saturday Vigil Mass
5:00 pm (English)

Sunday Mass

7:00 am (English)
8:30 am (Spanish)
10:30 am (English)
12:30 pm (English)

Daily Mass

Monday through Thursday
7:45 am
Friday: 8:30 am

Parish Office Hours

Monday through Friday
8:30 am - 1:00 pm
2:00 pm - 5:30 pm

Saturday and Sunday

8:00 am - 12:00 pm
✉ollenriquezy@gmail.com
818-352-3218

Church Location

7315 Apperson St
Tujunga, CA 91042

Office Location

7344 Apperson St
Tujunga, CA 91042

OLL School Office Hours

✉officemanager@olltujunga.org
818-353-1106

Adoration and Benediction
First Fridays after 8:30 am Mass

Reconciliation

Saturdays: 3:45 pm - 4:45 pm

Rosary

After Daily Mass

Baptism and Marriages
Please call the Parish Office
818-352-3218

Our Lady of Lourdes Church and School

A Catholic Tradition in the foothills of Los Angeles since 1920



17th Sunday in Ordinary Time

First Reading: 1 Kings 3:5,7-12
Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 119
—Lord, I love your commands.
Second Reading: Romans 8:28-30
Gospel: Matthew 13:44-52

The “bargaining prayer” of Abraham and the very prayer that Jesus taught us will make sense only when seen within an ongoing intimate relationship. We can pray to God only because he has made himself a friend and a Father to us. It is not our prayer itself that first builds this close relationship. On the contrary, it was God Himself who came as friend and father, which made it possible for us to approach him in prayer. God came to us and blessed us first before we could ever go to him in prayer. He knows our needs, he knows what's in our heart, before we can even utter a single word.

But why do we need to approach God in prayer if He knows our needs in the first place, if He is, after all, an all-good and all-knowing God as we believe him to be? Well, this is precisely the nature of a loving relationship. It's a two-way movement of giving oneself and receiving the other as part of us. Prayer is a process of intercommunication of our very being with God. We are not dealing with an alien, heartless robot who manipulates us from a distance, one that is unapproachable, indifferent, or deaf to our concerns. God, rather, is a person with whom we can relate personally through prayer. He is our loving Father, and we are his children. Furthermore, prayer is a recognition of our being a creature and God as the creator. We are not self-made gods, and we cannot save ourselves from death no matter the hubris of our human intellect and achievement.

Jesus also commanded us to pray unceasingly. God has no need of our prayers; our prayer is for our own benefit. As we read many times in Scripture, God had a change of heart

when people pleaded with him. It is not out of compulsion that He did so, but out of free love. There's no compulsion in love. Prayer does not change circumstances as much as it changes us. In prayer we are transformed according to the mind and heart of God, and we learn to embrace his will each day. More importantly, the fruits of our prayer may extend beyond ourselves and that's why we can pray for other people. The angels and saints in heaven are also in communion with us in prayer.

In business-type dealings or relationships, one receives something in proportion to the amount one can pay. It is based on a principle of commensurate reciprocity, where one gets something in the same amount one gives. A loving relationship, on the contrary, is governed by a totally different logic - the logic of surplus or excess. There's always something more. The value of the gift exceeds the tag prize. We deserve nothing and yet we receive everything, God has loved us even while we were still sinners. Prayer is not a kind of payment but a grateful response to a love without measure. Prayer is the true mark of a Christian.

When parents take care of their child, they don't mind at all how many sleepless nights they have to endure, how much attention they give, how much of their savings go to the child's education, etc. They are able to sacrifice everything without question when it comes to the welfare of their child. Indeed, Love knows no limit. Hence, a prayer done in love makes all things possible for our salvation. As children of a loving Father, we keep on praying and loving. ♦

~ Fr. Alejandro (Andy) Bangilan III.

Cast into the Deep (July 30)

Centering on Our Eucharistic Spirituality

Fr. Rolly Astudillo

On June 11, the Feast of Corpus Christi, we entered the Parish level of the Eucharistic Revival. To further get into the spirit of this national movement in our parish, page 2 of our bulletin will feature reflections on the Eucharistic Revival, on Eucharist as Liturgy, and the Eucharist as Real Presence. We plan to invite those who have served at OLL in the past as priests, deacons, and retreat masters to offer their reflection. We feel certain that we will be enriched and spiritually nourished by their reflections. To start the ball rolling, we are reprinting Fr. Rolly's reflection from January 21, 2018.

It is my fifth* New Year at Our Lady of Lourdes as Parish Priest: from being Parish Administrator to Pastor and throughout my sojourn with all in the Parish, signs of growth and renewal led to the re-introduction of the evening mass on Sunday; Saturdays became filled with celebrations of the cycles of life and death; weekdays were saturated with Pastoral Meetings and Administrative tasks.

What has not escaped my notice are those who come to the daily morning mass. Although they are not as many as those who come to our weekend masses, these are the faithful who consecrate themselves and our community at the beginning of the day with the celebration of the Holy Eucharist. Our everyday celebration of the Eucharist has not only nourished us personally but our faith-community as well in our never-ending journey of Being and Becoming Church.

Being and Becoming Church is a paradigm shift where the parish is home and home is the parish. The common thread that runs through these two notions is the Eucharist. For while the actual Eucharistic Presence resides in the parish, the parish who build the community are themselves Eucharist to one another, wherever they may be.



The Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches us that "The Eucharist is the 'source and summit of the Christian life.' The other sacraments, and indeed all ecclesiastical ministries and works of the apostolate, are bound up with the Eucharist and are oriented toward it. For in the Blessed Eucharist is contained the whole spiritual good of the Church, namely Christ himself, our Pasch." (CCC Part Two, No. 1324; Lumen Gentium #11)

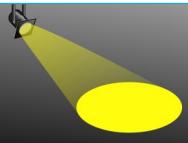
To say that the Eucharist is the "source and summit of Christian spirituality" means at least two things. First, that Christian spirituality flows from the Eucharist as its source, the way light streams forth from the sun. And second, that Christian spirituality is supremely realized in and ordered to the Eucharist as its summit or highpoint – that to which all of our actions should ultimately be directed.

Christian spirituality, then, is a two-way street. It leads us from the Eucharist as our starting point out into the world of daily life and it takes us back home to the Eucharist after our sojourn in the world.

These two dimensions of the Eucharist – its being both the "source" and "summit" of Christian spirituality – reveal how the Eucharist, being Christ Himself, brings God and man together in a saving dialogue, a mutual giving and receiving relationship. In short, it is a covenant of love. The Eucharist is at once the Father's gift of Himself in Christ to us and, through Christ, our offering of Christ and, with Him, of ourselves – our minds and hearts, our daily lives – to the Father.

As the source of Christian spirituality, the Eucharist reveals to us that our salvation begins with God; not ourselves. God offers Himself to us in Christ first. At the same time, as the summit of Christian spirituality, the Eucharist is one's supreme, grace-enabled, freely-given offering of himself or herself back to God through Jesus Christ, our High Priest, by the power of the Holy Spirit. The union or intimate personal fellowship between God and man realized through God's gift of Himself to us and our faithful response is what we call communion. In other words, this communion with God and with one another is brought about by grace and lived out in faith, hope and charity. ♦♦♦

* editor's note: Fr. Rolly is now in his 12th year at OLL.



Parish Pictorial Parish Life

It is easy to think that coordinating events in the parish is a piece of cake. Our church and bulletin announcements tell us where to go, when and at what time for the different events that spice up our Parish Life. Behind the scenes, the scramble for space for the ideal date and time slots has already happened and we hope that all anyone can see and experience is the pleasure of attending the event be it a dance, a retreat or what have you. Tuesday, last week (7/18) the ministry heads got together to iron out any kinks in a year's worth of schedules requested. It was a wonderful exercise in collaboration and having the good of the Parish and the School in mind.



Jackie Tanker
facilitating the
calendaring exercise



Ministry Heads posing for posterity after "high level
negotiations"



Last Sunday (7/23), in observance of World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly, blessings were bestowed on the day's celebrants as they took their seats and those around them extended their hands in blessing over them, while Fr. Rolly intoned the prayers of blessing.

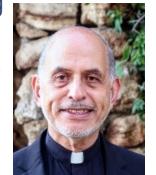


The Parish Formation and Worship Development Commission, Evangelization Ministry for short, celebrated 9 years of ministry with past and present members sharing a meal at the rectory. In June, 2014, Fr. Rolly constituted the group and after a few meetings of spiritual and team formation, a formal charter was developed and signed on 7/31/2014. With an original mandate to shepherd the various ministries at OLL starting with developing a charter for each one of them, the group quickly pivoted to evangelization initiatives including retreats, study programs, prayer services, etc, all at the service of bringing Jesus, the Good News, to everyone.

In Case You Missed It.... "The Quadruplets"

On July 18th, Pope Francis named 4 new auxiliary bishops for the Archdiocese of Los Angeles: Msgr. Albert M. Bahhuth, Rev. Matthew Elshoff, OFM, Cap., Rev. Brian Nunes, and Rev. Slawomir S. Szkredka. Archbishop Gomez, at a press conference, gave thanks to God and to Pope Francis for this fourfold blessing. Of the bishops-elect, Archbishop Gomez remarked, "Each is a man of prayer who loves Jesus and has a deep desire to share God's love and to serve God's people. We are praying for them, and we entrust them to the tender care of Holy Mary, our Blessed Mother." Four out of five LA Archdiocese Regions are under the leadership of interim episcopal vicars. Their episcopal ordination will be held on September 26.

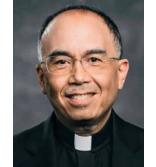
Msgr. Albert M. Bahhuth grew up in Beirut, Lebanon emigrating to the US to study Engineering. He served as Vicar General and Moderator of the Curia before taking on his current post as pastor at Holy Family in South Pasadena. It was as moderator of the Curia that Msgr Albert was instrumental in approving our request for funds to install our new HVAC.



Fr. Matthew Elshoff is, in essence a local son of our foothills as he grew up in L.A. attending St. Bede's and St Francis High School. He joined the Capuchins and was ordained in 1982. Some in our parish may remember him as the president of the St. Francis High School from the 1990s to 2008.



Fr. Brian Nunes is a familiar face as he served as priest secretary to Abp Gomez from 2015 to 2019 then succeeded Msgr Bahhuth as Vicar General and Moderator of the Curia in September 2020. Fr. Brian was ordained in 2008 and served at Mary Star of the Sea until 2014.



Fr. Slawomir S. Szkredka, at 49, is the youngest of the bishops-elect and hails from Poland. He finished his studies for the priesthood, which he started in Krakow, at a seminary in Michigan. He was ordained for Los Angeles in 2002 and has been teaching at St. John's Seminary since 2015.



Parish News

Back to School with Backpacks of Love!



Backpacks of Love campaign is in full swing. We need your support to provide 400 backpacks filled with school supplies for students whose families are struggling.

Cash and check donations may be dropped off or mailed to the Parish Office at 7344 Apperson St, Tujunga, CA 91042. Please make the checks payable to: Catholic Daughters of the Americas. Call Teresa at 818-648-9879, or email her at Tajb04@roadrunner.com if you have any questions.

Thank you for your constant support!
Court San Ysidro #1507
Catholic Daughters of the Americas



Spanish Christian Initiation for Adults: Do you know someone

who would like to complete their missing sacraments of initiation in Spanish? Please refer them to our RCIA program in Spanish (RICA). Registration is open to all adults. Complete information can be found on page 6 of this bulletin.

Confirmation/ Youth Ministry Programs:

Registration for Confirmation and other youth ministry programs will start on Sunday, August 6th. The Confirmation team will be on the Hospitality patio for the first three Sundays of August (Aug 6, 13 and 20) to help parents and students register and provide more information.



FAMILY FUN DAYS

Friday, Sept 8 to
Sunday, Sept 10



TOGETHER IN MISSION

Goal:	<u>a/o 7/17/23</u>
Pledged:	\$44,396.00
Paid:	\$36,292.25
Over/Under Goal:	<u>\$27,464.58</u> (\$16,931.42)

If you haven't submitted your pledge, it is not too late. Pledge envelopes are in the bulletin racks. Thank you for your generosity.

Papal Prayer Intention for August:

For World Youth Day

We pray the World Youth Day in Lisbon will help young people to live and witness the Gospel in their own lives.



Virtus Training is Returning!

We have two upcoming sessions for the Safeguarding the Children Program here at OLL.

On Saturday, August 26th from 9:00-10:30am we will present: "Keeping the Promise Alive" for everyone who attended the original Virtus or the updating session in the Fall of 2019. You can call the parish office and see if you are on the "need to be there list". This session is only for those of you who attended in Fall of 2019 and not later.

On Saturday October 7th, we will present: "Protecting God's Children" to anyone in the parish 18 and older who wishes to volunteer in any capacity here at OLL. This is for anyone who has not attended a Virtus session before, did not renew after 4 years, or who did not register on line after they attended a session.

You need to call the parish office to reserve a place for either session as space is limited and other parishes are eligible to attend. Parish office at 818-352-3218.

From the OLL Religious Education Program

Registration for the fall semester will begin the week of Sept. 5th. All students will need to register, both 1st year and those returning for 2nd year. The first class for the fall semester will begin on Sept. 26th.

Do you want to be an R.E. Teacher? We are also looking for anyone interested in becoming an R.E. teacher. If you have an hour and 20 minutes on Tuesday's and would like to bring the word of God & the Sacraments of Reconciliation & First Holy Communion to the children, please contact the parish office at (818) 352-3218 or Gloriann McGowan at (213) 278-8910 with any questions.

Lions Roar: OLL School News

New Schoolyear Begins on August 23. Enrollment is open. Are you interested in a Catholic Education? Do you need tuition assistance? We can help! Apply for NEI today! Call the school office at 818-353-1106.

OLL School Golf Tournament



Join us for an amazing day as communities across the Foothills and beyond support our OLL families!

The OLL School Charity Golf Tournament will be held tomorrow, July 31st at Moorpark Country Club (11800 Championship Dr, Moorpark, CA 93021). Visit www.ollcharitygoltournament.com or call Anita Salerno-Dominguez at 818.397.5178 for more information. See Flyer on p 8.

Do we have your current email address?



If you are not receiving Fr. Rolly's Friday letter and other notifications from OLL, please call the parish office now and provide your email address.

Celebrating our Saint for the Week

July 31: St. Ignatius Loyola, Priest (1491-1556): St. Ignatius of Loyola is a pretty well known saint, having founded the Society of Jesus or more commonly called, Jesuits. Their spirituality can be summed up in their motto, *Ad majorem Dei gloriam*—“for the greater glory of God.” He was a prolific writer, recording his thoughts and experiences. His greatest work is “Spiritual Exercises.” Here are some quotes:

“O my God, teach me to be generous, teach me to serve you as I should, to give without counting the cost, to fight without fear of being wounded, to work without seeking rest, to labor without expecting any reward, but the knowledge that I am doing your most holy will.”

“He who goes about to reform the world must begin with himself, or he loses his labor.”

“He who carries God in his heart bears heaven with him wherever he goes.”

Eucharistic Revival Prayer

Heavenly Father, we thank you for the gift of your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, who promised to stay with us always, until the end of the age.

Reawaken our wonder at His presence in the Most Holy Eucharist. May our hearts burn within us as He opens the Scriptures and breaks the bread.

Give us the eyes of faith to recognize His presence in our brothers and sisters, especially in the face of the poor and the suffering.

Nourished by the Eucharist, send us forth to walk faithfully as missionary disciples, proclaiming the Gospel to every heart and extending Your kingdom to every land.

We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.



Why is it important to screen volunteers and staff?



A screening process for hiring new staff members or volunteers is critical to protecting children, because this process makes it harder for abusers to gain access to potential victims. When organizations are careful about screening, it sends a message that they are

committed to preventing child abuse. Screening practices can include requiring standard application information, or thorough references and criminal background checks. For more information on screening processes, read the VIRTUS® article “The Importance of Screening and Selecting Employees and Volunteers” at lacatholics.org/did-you-know/.

Read the VIRTUS® article “The Importance of Screening and Selecting Employees and Volunteers” here.

Mass Intentions

July 29 to August 4, 2023



Saturday July 29

Eduardo Herrera †
Bernadette Ramos †
Clara Isidro †
Adela Hernandez †
Helen Tindoy †
Choy & Emma--Thanksgiving

Flor Calon -- Birthday Blessing & Thanksgiving
Joel & Flerida Nolasco -- Wedding Anniversary Blessing
Rudy Beharrysingh -- Birthday Blessing

5:00 PM

Sunday July 30

Bienvenido Venus †
Jose Domingo Enriquez †
Mary Normandie †-- 17th Death Anniversary

7:00 AM

Blanca Palomino †-- Death Anniversary

8:30 AM

Zenaida Jesmer †
Isabel Morales †
Vivian Taylor Fox †-- Birthday Remembrance
Correne Murphy -- Birthday Blessing

10:30 AM

Jacinto Cagatao †
Valen Gregorio -- Birthday Blessing

12:30 PM

Monday July 31

Angela Alberto †-- Birthday Remembrance
Sylvia Escueta †
Eleanor Graf -- Birthday Blessing

7:45 AM

Tuesday August 1

Esperanza Alejo †

7:45 AM

Thursday August 3

Manuel Mendoza †-- Death Anniversary

7:45 AM

Friday August 4

John † & Jen Scapaticci †-- Death Anniversary
Jose Domingo Enriquez †

8:30 AM

“The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure buried in a field...”

Mt 12:44

Readings for July 31 to August 6, 2023

7/31	Ex 32:15-24, 30-34 / Ps 106:19-20, 21-22, 23 / Mt 13:31-35
8/ 1	Ex 33:7-11; 34:5b-9, 28 / Ps 103:6-7, 8-9, 10-11, 12-13 / Mt 13:36-43
8/ 2	Ex 34:29-35 / Ps 99:5, 6, 7, 9 / Mt 13:44-46
8/ 3	Ex 40:16-21, 34-38 / Ps 84:3, 4, 5-6a and 8a, 11 / Mt 13:47-53
8/ 4	Lv 23:1, 4-11, 15-16, 27, 34b-37 / Ps 81:3-4, 5-6, 10-11ab / Mt 13:54-58
8/ 5	Lv 25:1, 8-17 / Ps 67:2-3, 5, 7-8 / Mt 14:1-12
8/ 6	Dn 7:9-10, 13-14 / Ps 97:1-2, 5-6, 9 / 2 Pt 1:16-19 / Mt 17:1-9

From scripture to life...

Do you have the courage and selflessness of Solomon, to ask God for an understanding heart?

en Nuestra Parroquia

Santo del Dia: 31 de julio: San Ignacio de Loyola, Sacerdote (1491-1556): San Ignacio de Loyola es un santo bastante conocido, habiendo fundado la Compañía de Jesús o más comúnmente llamados Jesuitas. Su espiritualidad se puede resumir en el lema, Ad majorem Dei gloriam—"para la mayor gloria de Dios". Fue un escritor prolífico, registrando sus pensamientos y experiencias. Su mayor obra es "Ejercicios Espirituales". Aquí hay algunas citas:

"Oh Dios mío, enséñame a ser generoso, enséñame a servirte como debo, a dar sin contar los gastos, a luchar sin temor a ser herido, a trabajar sin buscar descanso, a trabajar sin esperar recompensa alguna, pero la sabiendo que estoy haciendo tu santísima voluntad."

"El que se propone reformar el mundo debe comenzar por sí mismo, o pierde su trabajo".

"Quien lleva a Dios en su corazón lleva el cielo consigo donde quiera que vaya".

Oración del Renacimiento Eucarístico

Padre Celestial, te damos gracias por el don de tu Hijo, nuestro Señor Jesucristo, que prometió estar con nosotros siempre, hasta el final de los tiempos.

Te pedimos que vuelvas a despertar en nosotros el sentimiento de asombro ante Su presencia en la Santísima Eucaristía. Que nuestros corazones arden cuando nos da a conocer las Escrituras y comparte el pan con nosotros.

Concédenos que con los ojos de nuestra fe reconozcamos Su presencia en nuestros hermanos y hermanas, especialmente en los pobres y en los que sufren.

Alimentados por la Eucaristía, envíanos para que caminemos fielmente como discípulos misioneros, proclamando el Evangelio a todos los corazones y extendiendo Tu reino a todas las naciones.

Te lo pedimos por Cristo nuestro Señor. Amén.

¿Por qué es importante evaluar a los voluntarios y al personal?



Un proceso de selección y evaluación para contratar a nuevos miembros del personal o voluntarios es fundamental para proteger a los niños porque este proceso dificulta que los abusadores tengan acceso a las víctimas potenciales. Cuando las organizaciones tienen cuidado con la selección, envían un mensaje de que están comprometidas con la prevención del abuso infantil. Las prácticas de selección pueden incluir solicitar información en una aplicación estándar, o referencias exhaustivas y verificación de antecedentes penales. Para obtener más información sobre los procesos de selección y evaluación, lea el artículo en inglés de VIRTUS® "The Importance of Screening and Selecting Employees and Volunteers" (La importancia de evaluar y seleccionar empleados y voluntarios) en lacatholics.org/did-you-know/.

Lea el artículo en inglés de VIRTUS® "The Importance of Screening and Selecting Employees and Volunteers" (La importancia de evaluar y seleccionar empleados y voluntarios) aquí.

"El Reino de los cielos se parece a un tesoro escondido en un campo."

Mt 12,44

Rito de Iniciación Cristiana para Adultos

- ¿ Quiere conocer a Dios y experimentar su amor y misericordia?
- ¿ No ha sido bautizado? ¿ Ha sido bautizado fuera de la fe católica?
- ¿ No ha hecho la 1^a Comunión o Confirmación?
- ¿ Quiere clases en español?

Decídase y venga todos los Jueves a RICA, empezando el 7 de septiembre 2023 en el Salón Parroquial de 7:00pm a 9:30pm. Las inscripciones estarán abiertas para todos los adultos mayores de 18 años a partir del 6 de agosto.

Desarrolle una comunidad de fe. Para registrarse y más información, llame a Armando Santiago al (747) 207-5637 o envíe un correo electrónico a lourdesrica21@gmail.com

¡Regreso a Clases con Mochilas de Amor!

La campaña Mochilas de Amor está en pleno apogeo.

Necesitamos su apoyo para proporcionar 400 mochilas llenas de útiles escolares para estudiantes cuyas familias tienen dificultades.

Las donaciones en efectivo y cheques se pueden dejar o enviar por correo a la Oficina Parroquial en 7344 Apperson St, Tujunga, CA 91042. Haga los cheques a nombre de: Catholic Daughters of the Americas. Llame a Teresa al 818-648-9879 o envíe un correo electrónico a Tajb04@roadrunner.com si tiene alguna pregunta.

¡Gracias por su apoyo constante!

Cancha San Ysidro #1507

Hijas Católicas de las Américas



Noticias de la escuela OLL

El nuevo año escolar comienza el 23 de agosto. La inscripción está abierta. ¿Estás interesado en una educación católica? ¿Necesita ayuda con la matrícula? ¡Podemos ayudar! ¡Solicite NEI hoy! Llame a la oficina de la escuela al 818-353-1106.

El Torneo de Golf de la Escuela OLL es el 31 de julio. Únase a nosotros. Visite www.ollcharitygoltournament.com o llame a Anita Dominguez al 818.397.5178 para obtener más información.

Intención de oración papal para Agosto:

Para la Jornada Mundial de la Juventud

Oramos para que la Jornada Mundial de la Juventud en Lisboa ayude a los jóvenes a vivir y dar testimonio del Evangelio en sus propias vidas.



De las escrituras a la vida ...

¿Tienes el coraje y el desinterés de Salomón, para pedirle a Dios un corazón comprensivo?

XVII Domingo Del Tiempo Ordinario**Primera Lectura:** 1 Reyes 3, 5-13**Salmo Responsorial:** Salmo 119

— Cuánto amo tu voluntad, Señor.

Segunda Lectura: Romanos 8, 28-30**Evangelio:** San Mateo 13, 44-52

La “oración de negociación” de Abraham y la misma oración que Jesús nos enseñó tendrán sentido solo cuando se vean dentro de una relación íntima continua. Podemos orar a Dios sólo porque se ha convertido en nuestro amigo y Padre. No es nuestra oración misma la que primero construye esta estrecha relación. Al contrario, fue Dios mismo quien vino como amigo y padre, lo que hizo posible que nos acercáramos a él en oración. Dios vino a nosotros y nos bendijo primero antes de que pudiéramos acudir a él en oración. Él conoce nuestras necesidades, sabe lo que hay en nuestro corazón, antes de que podamos pronunciar una sola palabra.

Pero, ¿por qué necesitamos acercarnos a Dios en oración si Él conoce nuestras necesidades en primer lugar, si Él es, después de todo, un Dios bueno y omnisciente como creemos que es? Bueno, esta es precisamente la naturaleza de una relación amorosa. Es un movimiento de dos vías, de entregarse y recibir al otro como parte de nosotros. La oración es un proceso de intercomunicación de nuestro propio ser con Dios. No estamos ante un robot alienígena, sin corazón, que nos manipula a distancia, inaccesible, indiferente o sordo a nuestras preocupaciones. Dios, más bien, es una persona con la que podemos relacionarnos personalmente a través de la oración. Él es nuestro Padre amoroso, y nosotros somos sus hijos. Además, la oración es un reconocimiento de que somos criaturas y Dios es nuestro creador. No somos dioses creados por nosotros mismos, y no podemos salvarnos de la muerte sin importar la arrogancia de nuestro intelecto y logros humanos.



Jesús también nos mandó a orar sin cesar. Dios no tiene necesidad de nuestras oraciones; nuestra oración es para nuestro propio beneficio. Como leemos muchas veces en las Escrituras, Dios cambió de opinión cuando la gente le rogó. No lo hizo por compulsión, sino por amor gratuito. No hay compulsión en el amor. La oración no cambia las circunstancias tanto como nos cambia a nosotros. En la oración somos transformados según la mente y el corazón de Dios, y aprendemos a abrazar su voluntad cada día. Más importante aún, los frutos de nuestra oración pueden extenderse más allá de nosotros mismos y es por eso que podemos orar por otras personas. Los ángeles y los santos en el cielo también están en comunión con nosotros en oración.

En tratos o relaciones de negocios, uno recibe algo en proporción a la cantidad que puede pagar. Se basa en un principio de reciprocidad commensurada, donde uno recibe algo en la misma cantidad que da. Una relación amorosa, por el contrario, se rige por una lógica totalmente diferente: la lógica del excedente o el exceso. Siempre hay algo más. El valor del regalo excede el precio de la etiqueta. No merecemos nada y sin embargo lo recibimos todo, Dios nos ha amado aun cuando aún éramos pecadores. La oración no es una especie de pago sino una respuesta agradecida a un amor sin medida. La oración es la verdadera marca de un cristiano.

Cuando los padres cuidan a su hijo, no les importa en absoluto cuántas noches de insomnio tienen que soportar, cuánta atención le dan, cuánto de sus ahorros se destinan a la educación del niño, etc. Son capaces de sacrificar todo sin dudarlo cuando se trata del bienestar de su hijo. De hecho, el amor no conoce límites. Por tanto, una oración hecha con amor hace posible todas las cosas para nuestra salvación. Como hijos de un Padre amoroso, seguimos orando y amando. ~ P. Alejandro (Andy) Bangilan III.

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