

Praying in the Spirit

For the past few weeks, we have been reading from chapter 8 of St. Paul's letter to the Romans, a chapter in which the Apostle teaches us the importance of the Spirit in the Christian life. Thus far St. Paul has taught us that if we live in Christ the Spirit of God lives in us, empowering us to live a new kind of life that leads to the fullness of life. St. Paul has also taught us, that the whole of God's creation will be redeemed at the end of the ages through the power of God's Spirit.

In today's reading St. Paul continues his discussion of the Spirit, teaching us that it is the Spirit of God within us that enables us to pray. It is the Spirit of God that supports our prayer by praying with and in us. It is the Spirit of God that helps us to pray for what is in accordance with God's purpose and our good.

Left to ourselves we do not know how to pray because we do not know the full purpose of God's plan. Left to ourselves we do not know how to pray for what is good for our own lives. This is why the Spirit comes to our aid, interceding for us before God.

The Spirit of God knows the will of God and God, who searches our hearts, understands the prayer of the Spirit within us. When we pray in the power of God's Spirit, the Spirit prays with and within us. When we pray in the power of God's Spirit, the Spirit empowers us to pray for what is important for our salvation.

Prayer is conversation with God; it is the way we talk with the God. But if we are to speak with God, we must pray in the power of God's own Spirit. We must ask for those things that will bring about God's purpose. We must ask for those things that are for the good of our salvation. But how do we do this?

We can do this because, as St. Paul tells us, each one of us is a temple of the Holy Spirit, and together all of us form a temple in which God dwells in our midst. Reflect upon this for a moment: *We are God's temple because the Spirit of God dwells in us.* And because the Spirit of God dwells in us we can pray in the power of God's Spirit.

To pray in the power of God's Spirit, however, we must place ourselves in the presence of God's Spirit. To pray in God's Spirit we must be quiet so that the Spirit can pray within us. To pray in God's Spirit we must allow ourselves to be led and guided by the Spirit of God.

There have been moments of tragedy, sorrow, sickness, and death when others have asked me to pray with and for them. At such moments, I must pray without a text, without a script, without a book. At such moments, I do not know what to say. And so I begin in silence and let the Spirit of God guide my words to say what is appropriate, what is right, what is in accord with God's purpose.

Praying in the Spirit is not mysterious or difficult; it is something we can do because each of us is a temple of God's Spirit, and all of us form the Temple of

God. Listen to God's Spirit; trust in the Spirit; and let Spirit of the living God lead you in the way of prayer.