

## TWENTY-NINTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Year A      October 19, 2014

### Theme: Prayers of Intercessions

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At every Sunday mass, during the time of the Universal Prayers, we pray for all the intentions recorded in the parish's **Book of Intercessions**.

These books, rest back by the Votive Candles, and provide a place for all the prayers, thanksgivings and anxieties of our community.

I sometimes page through these books and am often moved by what I read.

I thought of these diverse prayers as I heard the words of St. Paul, remembering the life of that long ago community in Thessalonica, Greece:

**"We give thanks for all of you... and constantly remember... your work of faith, your labor of love and you endurance in hope."**

The prayers in our Books of Intercession stand as **testimony to the work of faith, the labor of love and the endurance** of our community.

It is faith, hope, and love recorded here in the block print scribble of young hands and the shaky script of old ones.

So many of these prayers **revolve around family** - no surprise, since family is the context of Christian life for most of us.

Prayers for children and grandchildren, parents and family:

Prayer for their health,  
for their return to faith,  
for their marriages, jobs, careers, finances.

Listen to these **actual prayers** from our Books of Intercession, only some names have been omitted to protect confidentiality:

- *For my Granddaughter on her 21<sup>st</sup> birthday.*
- *My son who was in a car accident.*
- *My son – that he get passing grades [here' hoping he's studying too].*
- *Help my daughter to find his way.*
- *Bring back to faith all our family members.*
- *Repair my marriage and bring my family closer than before.*
- *May my children return to church.*
- *For the safe deployment to Afghanistan and the return home of the Blackjack Brigade and our son.*
- *For my daughters and my ex. --- Isn't that an extraordinary prayer.*

You can **hear the pleading** in some of the prayers:

- *For my grandson to get a job!!*
- *Dear Jesus, take care of our dear son; he is lost. Amen. Thanks.*
- *For Sarah to conceive a child, please, dear Jesus.*
- *May we overcome our troubles and become a family again.*

Some of the prayers are **real heart-breakers**:

- *For my loved ones in Palestine: that there will soon be peace.*
- *Lord, help my brothers and me resolve our differences and get things settled as quickly and amicably as possible.*
- *Please pray for my family to lighten our burdens and accept help from those who can offer it.*
- *Please pray for our family – the bank is in process of deciding if we will be able to keep our home.*

These are the real prayers, the burdens of heart that our fellow parishioners have brought with them to worship each Sunday.

They have also brought so many physical and mental health issues:

They prayed:

- *My mental health and my eyesight.*
- *Help in kidney decision.*
- *Freedom for our daughter from addiction.*
- *For the health of our baby to come.*
- *Recovery of grandson from surgery.*
- *My best friend, let her get a new kidney, restore her health.*
- *Negative test results this week.*
- *Please pray for my son whom doctors can't seem to help.*
  
- [And one for all you older parishioners who struggled to get out of bed this morning:] *God bless all the older people of the parish who suffer from aches and pains.*

The needs prayed for covered the whole range of human concerns:

- *For a friend who needs a job*
- *Guidance in a relationship*
- *Help Ricky to do well and find his way in school and life*
- *So that God will not be so mad at me*
- *That the bullying of my grandchildren will stop*
- *Persecuted Catholics worldwide and suffering people of Sudan*
- *Grandson come out of his shell, divorce proceedings go well for a daughter and*
- *For all who suffer silent who have been traumatized by sexual violation*
- *For my mom in her last day; may she go in peace.*
  
- [I loved this one:] *Please, Lord, send us a new priest.*
- [I loved this one even better:] *Give me peace and satisfaction with what I have.*

- [On one page we read this prayer] *for \_\_\_\_ and me to spend more time together this summer* [and a few pages later a prayer] *for me not to worry about \_\_\_\_ any more.*

We did **lots of thanking** the Lord in our prayers too.

Thanks for getting some new jobs, thanks for successful surgeries and positive test results, thanks for our families and many times thanks for all the wonderful blessings you have given us.

How about this touchingly beautiful prayer: *“Thank you, Lord, for another Easter with Mom.”*

We also **remembered our beloved dead** in our prayers, remembered them over and over and over – so special are they to us, so much do we believe they live on in the presence of God.

In the Books of Intercession we see the names of so many of our members and our family who went through sickness before they passed over to the Lord and the weeks, sometimes months, of prayer that supported and surrounded them.

We also see the names of their families as we prayed for them during their time of grief.

What stands out, however, is the **continuing love and grief** of widows and mothers and children.

Some signed the books nearly every week with words of remembrance and love – even when their spouse or child has been dead for a decade or more.

- [One of my favorites] *Happy Birthday, Joe. I love you.*
- [Around Mother’s Day and Father’s Day we often read these simple prayers]: *Rest in peace mom. I love you.*
- For John and Donna, sadly missed and loved very much.
- My brother Bob who passed away this morning.

- [or this heart breaker] *Please tell my husband how much I miss him, Lord, and let him know I count the days until I can see him again.*

I cannot say it any better than did our beloved Paul to that community of Thessalonians:

**We give thanks to God always for all of you,  
remembering you in our prayers,  
unceasingly calling to mind your work of faith and [your] labor of  
love and [your] endurance in hope....**