



Back to Church Sunday 25 September 2011

Back to Church Sunday Insert 2 - The Power of Prayer

Prevent us, O Lord, in all our doings with thy most gracious favor and further us with thy continual help, that in all our works begun, continued, and ended in thee, we may glorify thy holy name, and finally by thy mercy obtain everlasting life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

We all have favorite prayers and this is one of mine. The word 'prevent' here means 'to go before,' so our petition is that our Lord will go before us in any undertaking so that our undertaking will be in His presence focused on His glory for His sake and for the sake of the Kingdom.

As members of the Cathedral Parish family there are many opportunities to pray corporately with others at any of our twenty-three services each week. While public prayer and worship is an integral part of our parish life, God calls each of us to be people of prayer. It begins in our Baptism where our parents and sponsors are given the duty to teach us to pray. The bishop reminds us at our Confirmation that we are strengthened to take ownership of the vows made at our Baptism.

Prayer is an inner response to God's invitation to become more deeply involved in our relationship with God. It begins with a subtle, unrecognized desire or ability to see things differently, to reach out to another person or creature, to experience life on a more than physical level. For some, yearnings deepen our life. Prayer may be a sudden discovery, a surpassing moment at work, a late afternoon stroll, or meeting an aggressive squirrel.

A form of prayer that naturally weaves itself into our life is conversation – a constant dialogue with God as we move through the changes of each day. Personal prayer stimulates an ongoing conversation with God. It might be regular and undisturbed or free-flowing filled with praise, adoration, intercessions and thanksgivings.

By drinking from the spiritual well of prayer, we are nourished and empowered to live fully. It is through prayer we experience God's direct love and God's unique call to us. In any developing relationship, time spent in intimate conversation and sharing is vital. An important component of knowing God is our prayer life.

All we do, offered up to God, is prayer. When we are able to let go of the distractions of the day and our concerns, we become more accessible to God's speech to us, to our hearts and to the workings of the Holy Spirit within and through us. Often it seems to us that we are doing the least when God is able to do

the most through us and to speak to us most clearly in prayer.

Preparations for Back to Church Sunday can take many shapes as people ponder how the process unfolds in each parish and in their personal lives. As members of the Cathedral Parish family we are invited to invite someone back to church. We will each respond differently, depending on our own personal spiritual life and commitment to the gospel.

Bringing this request to your personal prayer life lets God be part of your reflections, conversation and response. Small or great, offer up the challenge to God in prayer. Inviting someone back to church may be something you do regularly. Perhaps it is something you have never done or would choose to do. Either way, offer up the challenge in your personal prayer life.

The first response we are asking everyone to consider is prayer. If we take this opportunity seriously, if we consider the importance of reaching out to others with Christian witness in mind, then any attempt to do so is worthy of prayer. To appropriately respond to the Back to Church Sunday process it would be helpful to pray about it asking God to guide us to respond. Ponder who you might ask. Why that person? Ask God for the strength to invite someone to worship. Pray that the person we invite may seriously consider the invitation to accompany you back to church. This is a very good place to start.

O Lord, from whom all good things do come: Grant to us thy humble servants, that by thy holy inspiration we may think those things that be good, and by thy merciful guiding may perform the same; through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen

God of love, of your goodness set us aflame with that fire of the Spirit which Christ brought upon the earth and longs to see blazing throughout the world, through him who lives and reigns with you and the Spirit now and for ever. Amen.

Almighty God, who by thy Son Jesus Christ didst give commandment to the Apostles that they should go into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature: Grant to us whom thou hast called into thy Church, a ready will to obey thy Word; and fill us with a hearty desire to make thy way known upon earth, thy saving health among all nations; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

**Save the Date:
Sunday, 25 September 2011**

