

Wednesday, 9 October 2019

Lk 11:1-4

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An ideal witness is the inspiration one leaves for others to be closer to the Lord. The gospel of the day is a powerful witness of John the Baptist and Jesus Christ that influence the disciples of Jesus. John the Baptist taught his disciples to pray. The disciples of Jesus asked Jesus; "Teach us to pray." It does not mean that they did not pray at all before that. But when they saw the disciples of John praying they were fascinated. And St. Luke presents Jesus himself at prayer. Jesus is the prime example of prayer, and his very example underlines the importance of prayer in the life of a disciple. And again in living closely with Jesus the disciples discovered a new kind of intimacy with God, by observing the way he prayed. These influences urged the disciples to ask Jesus to teach them to pray.

As missionaries we also have the duty to influence others to be in the close intimacy with the Lord. When we are with others, we should radiate the values of the kingdom by being in the presence of the Lord. As the baptismal responsibility of every Christian is to be sent to proclaim it's also our duty to pray and intercede for our brothers and sisters. Our prayer should empower us and our brothers and sisters in our daily sustenance, struggles, suffering, temptation, sinfulness and persecution. It is in this regard prophet Jonah becomes disoriented as he was greatly displeased and indignant when he knew God changed his decision to destroy the wicked people of Nineveh. Jonah wanted the people of Nineveh face the punishment of God. He did not feel the need to intercede to God on behalf of the people of Nineveh. God effected the change of heart through the preaching of prophet Jonah and they repented. This is why God changed his decision to destroy them. By this God shows the face of a merciful and loving Father who does not want any of his children to be perished. This is why Jesus taught his disciples to pray 'Our Father who is in heaven' to feel the intimacy with Him. God also instructs Jonah the need to be merciful by the incident of the sprouting and perishing of the plant in front of his own eyes.

In my initial months of the mission experience in Ghana I was uncomfortable with something. I had been watching elderly people praying rosary personally with rosaries in their hands during the Holy Eucharist. This irritated me and I instructed them about it. But after a few months I noticed the same practice again. When I asked them about it they said, as rosary is part and parcel of their lives they feel more inspired to be attentive in the church. Praying the rosary during mass pushes them to be more concentrated in the Holy Mass. We may feel funny or theologically incorrect but they were feeling intimacy of the Lord through the mediation of Bl. V. Mary.

May our intimacy with the Lord and intercession for our brothers and sisters inspire many to experience the compassion and closeness of the Heavenly Father. Thus, we may become an instrument of the conversion of the heart. Amen

Published by

CMI General Department of Evangelization and Pastoral Ministry