

Reflection Thursday week 11 - 2021

How to pray is a long-standing question. The Our Father is a mainstay prayer which teaches us to approach the Father in the right disposition in which forgiveness is key: the forgiveness of God for us and our forgiveness of others. It asks us to open ourselves fully to God's graces. The penny catechism had a lovely explanation of prayer: *the raising of the mind and heart to God*. Any acknowledgement of God is an opening to prayer including being angry with God, feeling God's absence, questioning God about the evils that we encounter in life: illness, tragedy, death etc. In Celtic spirituality the natural world speaks loudly of the presence of God. The pandemic has done the same if only causing us to question why it happened in the first place. Birds sing to us of God's presence from early morning to late at night. The spring and summer flowers evoke something of the beauty of their creator. The pandemic has given us more time to reflect and any reflection that involves God is prayer. Jesus says very clearly that God already knows what wish to pray for. Reflection gives God the time to speak to us; probably not in words but in pictures, or music, or images, or feelings but most certainly in spirit. A witty comment made about prayer is, "*When I wake up in the morning. I thank God for the new Day and then I say. God, you've read the papers this morning, what are you going to do about it??*" A good phrase to add is "*How can I help?*"

Creator of our common home, you fill the earth, sea and sky with life.

*Forgive our neglect of your creation, our choking pollution,
the damage of our careless habits and our indifference to future generations.*

Help us amend our lives and refuse plastic we cannot reuse.

*Help us work for lasting change and live simply and gently on the earth
to the glory of your Son, through whom you made this fragile world. Amen.*

Rt Revd Steven Croft, Bishop of Oxford

A man walks up to a priest and asks "*Will you please pray for my hearing?*"

"*Of course*", replies the priest, and proceeds to cup his hands over the man's ears and says a prayer.

When he's finished praying, the priest asks the man, "*Well, how's your hearing now?*"

The man replies, "*I don't know. It doesn't take place until Tuesday.*"