
Year of Prayer: The mystery of the Covenant has been entrusted to us

Prayer is a word that has fallen into disuse, that is derided and, all too often, kept hidden in every human relationship. Not out of discretion, not out of modesty, but so as not to be seen as poor fools or backward-looking people who still believe that they have been created, desired by God who loves them. The covenant, the *berith*, that the Most High sealed with the people of Israel is not just a relationship. It is much more than that, it opens up a perspective on the deepest dimension of biblical time: God has become Adam's partner. He will never abandon him, because the covenant is unbreakable. It reveals the deepest vocation of the human person: to love God because He loves us.

The mystery of the Covenant is entrusted to us: take it or leave it. In complete freedom: this is the biblical time.

Jesus Christ, through his preaching, death and resurrection, sealed the covenant and taught us how to pray by uttering our prayerful invocation: the Lord's Prayer. As St. Augustine says, this gift of prayer is sublime: *"Go through all the words of the holy prayers [in Scripture], and I do not think you will find anything in them that is not contained and included in the Lord's Prayer."* **His Presence, in us and among us, is always waiting to be remembered, invoked and praised. Ironically, as Paolo De Benedetti taught us, we need to ... awaken Him. Not because He is asleep and hides His Presence, but so that He feels called and thus becomes more benevolent, more redeeming.** Francis' invitation at the opening of the Year of Prayer is not a mere formality or a sort of... mundane practice... such as the repetition of formulas or the... noisy conclamation. The purpose is to help us rediscover the reality, or at least the possibility, if not the concrete experience, of the Presence of our Creator in us, in the midst of our multifaceted and therefore challenging everyday life, albeit stained by the overwhelming experience of a fast-paced, so-called hit-and-run lifestyle. Our Creator, who has not only immersed us in history - who has not "cast us aside" and forgotten us - pulsates inside us and moves our footsteps alongside His, while He is forever creating this world that would like to evade Him by setting its own goals: profit, wealth, success. Let us then accept the invitation not to pray according to categories, but to become prayerful.

To become people who live and breathe knowing that they are not alone, that they are the dwelling place of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

To listen, to respond, to dialogue, to embrace the ever-flowing Trinitarian love. Tertullian, Father of the Church, wrote: "In saying 'Father' we also call him 'God'. That appellation is one both of filial duty and of power. Again, in the Father the Son is invoked; for I, says He, and the Father are One (John 10:30). Nor is even our mother the Church passed by, if that is, in the Father and the Son is recognized the mother, from whom arises the name both of Father and of Son." During this Year, speaking on behalf of the Church, Francis wishes to lead us to adopt that attitude, he wants us to seek it, to love it and to make it a priority. This does not mean alienating ourselves from our daily work, distancing ourselves from everyone, almost as if we were misogynists. On the contrary, it means being immersed in daily life, in the awareness that we are being accompanied, that we know to whom we should turn our gaze, in thanksgiving, in praise, in asking for help. In this way we will be saved. We will be neighbours and friends to each person with whom we share our pilgrimage to the Father.

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