
Pope Francis at general audience: “Prayer cannot be done with calculators”

Prayer is "the longing for encounter" with God, who "knows no hatred." "He is always at the doorstep of our hearts", with the patience of a father and a mother, the Pope said in his second catechesis dedicated to prayer livestreamed from the Library of the Apostolic Palace. Prayer belongs to everyone and "it does not occur with calculators", said the Holy Father. In his greetings, Francis recalled the anniversary of the first apparitions of Our Lady of Fatima and the assassination attempt on John Paul II, announcing to the faithful that next Monday, May 18, at 7 a.m., he will offer Mass at his tomb to mark the centenary of his birth. In his catechesis the Holy Father delved deeply into what happens when we pray: *"Our emotions participate in prayer, yet it would be wrong to say that prayer is emotion alone. Intelligence prays, but praying is more than just an intellectual activity. Our body prays, but we can speak to God even with the most severe disability. Prayer involves our entire being, if we pray with our heart."* **“Prayer is an impetus, it is an invocation that extends beyond ourselves** - something that is born in the innermost depths of our being and reaches out, because it feels the longing for an encounter. That yearning is more than a need, more than a necessity: it is a journey." "Prayer is the voice of an 'I' that wanders, that is groping its way through, seeking an "other" beyond ourselves": the example chosen by Francis: *"The meeting between "my inner being" and the "Other" cannot occur with calculators. It's a human encounter, proceeding tentatively to find the "Other" that my "inner being" is seeking."* Christian prayer is "born from a revelation, entering into relationship with God's most tender face that instills no fear." This, for the Pope, is the primary characteristic of Christian prayer: "While mankind was accustomed to approach God with some trepidation, somewhat frightened by this fascinating and tremendous mystery, accustomed to worship Him in a subservient manner, similar to that of a subject who would not disrespect his lord, Christians can turn to God and dare to confidently call Him 'Father.' In fact, Jesus calls him "Papa." *"Christianity has banished any type of 'feudal' relationship from the connection with God," Francis said. In Christianity, "tendencies toward subjection or vassalage, are replaced with friendship, covenant, closeness and communion."* **“We can ask God for anything, explain anything, tell him everything”**, the Pope assured: "Regardless of whether we feel at fault in our relationship with God: even if we are not good friends, if we are not grateful children, if we are not faithful spouses. He never stops loving us." "God is the faithful ally: if men and women cease to love, He continues to love, even if love leads Him to Calvary", Francis pointed out: *"God is always waiting at the doorstep of our heart. He is waiting for us to open the door, sometimes He knocks, but He is not intrusive, He just waits. God's patience with us is the patience of a father and a mother combined. And when He knocks, He does so tenderly and with infinite love". For "He knows no hatred: He is hated, but He knows not hate. Only love.* This is the God to whom we pray, the passionate nucleus of every Christian prayer. The God of love, our Father, who awaits us and accompanies us."

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