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## Pope at audience: “do not be ashamed to pray, God always answers”

“We pray as humans, as what we are” the Pope said in unprepared remarks, pointing out that Christian prayer is fully human, and it includes praise and supplication. “When Jesus taught His disciples to pray, He did so with the Lord’s Prayer, where “we pray for the simplest gifts, for the most of everyday gifts,” Francis said during the catechesis of the General Audience livestreamed from the Library of the Apostolic Palace. “To ask, to supplicate. This is very human”, the Pope remarked: “At times we can believe we do not need anything, that we are enough for ourselves, and we live in total self-sufficiency. This happens at times! But sooner or later this illusion vanishes.” The human being “is an invocation, that at times becomes a cry, often withheld.” “We all experience, at some time or another in our existence, the time of melancholy, of solitude.” Francis said: *“At times it seems that everything collapses, that the life lived so far has been in vain. And in these situations, when it seems that everything is falling apart, there is only one way out: the cry, the prayer “Lord, help me!”. Prayer can open up a sliver of light in the densest darkness.”* “We human beings share this invocation of help with the rest of creation”, pointed out the Holy Father: “We are not the only ones praying in this boundless universe: every fragment of creation bears the desire for God. And Saint Paul himself expressed it in this way: ‘We know that the whole creation has been groaning in travail together until now; and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly.’”

**“We should not be shocked if we feel the need to pray, we should not be ashamed. And, especially when we are in need, to ask”,**

is the Pope’s invitation. We must pray also in happy moments, “thank God for everything that is given to us, and not to take anything for granted or as if it were owed to us: everything is grace.” However, “we must not suffocate the supplication that rises up in us spontaneously.” Francis went on to note that “Prayer of petition goes in step with acceptance of our limit and our nature as creatures. **One may even not reach the point of belief in God, but it is difficult not to believe in prayer:** it simply exists, it presents itself to us as a cry; and we all know this inner voice that may remain silent for a long time, but one day awakens and cries out.” “And we know that God will respond”, the Pope assured:

**“God always answers: maybe today, tomorrow, but he always answers, in one way or another.**

The Bible repeats it countless times: God listens to the cry of those who invoke Him. Even our reluctant questions, those that remain in the depths of our heart, that we are ashamed to express: the Father listens to them and wishes to give us the Holy Spirit, which inspires every prayer and transforms everything.” *“In prayer there is always a question of patience, always, of supporting the wait”,* the Pope concluded. The time of Advent is typically a time of expectation “But all our life is also *in waiting*, And prayer is always in expectation, because we know that the Lord will answer.” “Even death trembles when a Christian prays, because it knows that everyone who prays has an ally stronger than it has: the Risen Lord”, the Holy Father explained: “Death has already been defeated in Christ, and the day will come when everything will be final, and it will no longer scorn our life and our happiness.” “Let us learn to stay in waiting; in expectation of the Lord”, the final exhortation delivered in unwritten remarks: “The Lord comes to visit us, not only in these great feasts.

**The Lord visits us every day, if we are in waiting.**

And very often we do not realise that the Lord is nearby, that He knocks on our door, and we let Him

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pass on by. 'I am afraid of God when He passes', Saint Augustine used to say. 'I am afraid He will pass and I will not realise'. And the Lord passes, the Lord comes, the Lord knocks. But if your ears are filled with other noise, you will not hear the call of the Lord. Staying in waiting: this is prayer."

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