



Catechist Connection

Glory to Jesus Christ!



Dear Catechists:

Throughout the Great Fast we pray the Ancient Prayer of St. Ephrem the Syrian. We will look at the prayer in detail in this edition of Catechist Connection.

“O Lord and Master of my life,”

In this first line we make the acknowledgment that we are creatures not Creator and that God is in charge. This is a huge step forward for us in our journey to holiness. It is the First Step of admitting Powerlessness before God and admitting humility. They cannot be words we rush over in a mindless way, we need to really speak these words with our heart.

“Keep from me the Spirit of Indifference and discouragement, lust of power and idle chatter”

Indifference is that laziness and passivity that pushes us down rather than up.

Discouragement is that hopelessness that nothing will ever change, there is no hope in God. It means to be timid, weak, without courage, without spiritual strength, without motivation sometimes what comes from such hopelessness is a desire for power to fill in the holes of our heart. We have Jesus as an example about not lusting after power. While the disciples were calling for a militant Messiah, Jesus washed their feet as a humble Servant. Words can heal as we have seen with Jesus but they can also destroy.

When words are destructive they are IDLE because they fail to give LIFE.

“Instead, grant to me, Your servant, the spirit of wholeness of being, humble-mindedness, patience and love.”

These are the four positive aims of repentance.

Wholeness of Being – Soundness of Body, heart, mind and spirit; having it all together.

Humble mindedness – St. Gregory of Sinai says that God-given humility is the ability to live by the fact that everything is from God.

Patience- means to endure, to bear and put up with people and things. To watch and wait, not to hurry and rush

Love – the crown of virtues, all growth and effort

God is Love

Unconditional Love of God is the Good News of Jesus

“O Lord and King, grant me the grace to be aware of my sins and not to judge my brothers and sisters; for you are blessed now and ever and forever. Amen.”

We return to God, who is Lord and King of our lives, and we are aware of Pride which always trips us up. We ask for the grace to be aware and not to judge anyone else. “It is for God alone to judge, to justify or to condemn. God knows the state of each one of us and our capacities, our deviations and our gifts ... according to the knowledge that God alone has. . . And how do you know what tears he has shed about it before God? You may well know the sin, but you do not know about the repentance.” St. Dorotheos of Gaza. Discourse on Refusal to Judge our Neighbour. Pp. 133, 135.

We make prostrations because our soul and body are not separate.

The whole person has fallen away from God; so the whole person should return to God. As the soul asks for mercy, so the body does also.