

Sermon- May 27<sup>th</sup> 2018 – Text: Mark1:29-39

## Not a Hail Mary

Grace and Peace to you and from our Lord Jesus Christ. Memorial Day weekend and we are the remnant that has returned. The nation is involved with picnics, barbecues, trips to the Cottage, and family get togethers. Perhaps following Church you will also indulge in those activities. Hopefully somewhere, sometime, you will offer a prayer for those who defended our nation and gave their life in doing so. That's what I will focus on in this homily.

In verse 35 of our Gospel lesson we have the following words - "Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed." If it's good enough for Jesus, it should be good enough for us. This will be an exercise in prayer or Prayer 101.

According to a Gallup poll, more of us will pray this week than will exercise, drive a car, or go to work. Nine out of 10 pray regularly and 75% claim they pray every day. I grew up with a table Prayer, taught to me by my parents who were born in the holy land (Norway).

"I Jesu Navn  
Gar vi til bords  
A spise og drikke  
Pa ditt ord  
Deg Gud til aere oss til gavn  
Sa far vi mat  
I Jesu navn. Amen"

For the non- Norwegians in attendance today - a translation. "In Jesus name to this table we go. To eat and drink according to His word. To God the honor, us the gain. So we have food in Jesus name. Amen"

You might have taught your children - Now I lay me down to sleep, I pray the Lord my soul to keep. You know that one. Or if you grew up in a Roman Catholic tradition, or watch Blue Bloods, you will remember, "Bless O Lord these thy gifts which we are about to receive from thy bounty."

Prayer even gets into our sports jargon. The date was 11/23/84. Boston College vs Miami. There were six seconds left in the game. A diminutive Doug Flutie throws a 52 yard pass into the end zone to Gerard Phelen for a touchdown. The announcer calls in a "Hail Mary" pass. A new word arrives. Our own Aaron

Rodgers has thrown a few Hail Mary passes himself. I always ponder what our Roman Catholic brothers and sisters think when one of their sacred prayers is known as a “last desperation pass.”

So we pray. At night, in the morning, sickness of a child, before an exam at school, during an exam at school, or awaiting test results. There is one prayer that stands above all others. The one most familiar to us - The Lord’s Prayer. In my 48 years of ministry if I say Our Father, everyone joins in. Probably would happen waiting for a light on College Avenue in Appleton. Problem is that it has become so common that we pray it without thinking. So let’s take a few moments and reflect on what we are praying.

*Our Father, who art in Heaven, hallowed be thy name.*

Here we are saying that God’s name is holy and awesome. We don’t dishonor it by taking it in vain. It is that name that created us and loves us. It is that name that gives us breath and sustains us. Very similar to an Orthodox Jew touching the Metuzzah. Powerful first sentence we are praying.

*Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.*

Well, of course His kingdom will be done in heaven. After all He is God. But we are praying that His kingdom will happen on earth. In other words, that is OUR job. We are praying that we will make it happen on earth. We will be God’s agent on earth to do what He taught, to walk the walk. You know! Help those in need, bring reconciliation, love all people, share God’s goodness. Did you realize that is what you are praying? Like Harry Bosch in the John Connelly novels - “everyone counts or no one counts.”

*Give us this Day our daily bread.*

Yes we pray for sustenance. But the word ‘our’ is important. Our/all. We are praying that we will assist others in their daily bread. With cash, food pantries, food drives. Thinking and acting so that others receive their sustenance. YouTube Story about \$100 bill.

*Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.*

We all know the concept of being saved by grace. But here we are praying to forgive others. Maybe a spouse, or a brother, or sister, or a co-worker, or a child. Someone who has hurt us. Peter asked Jesus whether or not forgiving someone 7 Times was enough. Jesus said 7 times 7 and he didn’t mean 49. He

meant always. When you pray this petition get in your mind of a picture who you will be forgiving.

*And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.*

Wow. We are praying to keep us away from the concept of “the devil made me do it.” Temptations abound. Who here has not had their share of temptations. God help me to stay clear of these temptations. Keep evil away from my door. Be with me - that’s what we are saying. Remember Jesus in the story of the storm on Lake Galilee. Yes he calmed the sea, but he also got in the boat. He is with us, Emmanuel. In our bedrooms, kitchens, workplace being a source of presence to ward off temptations and bad stuff.

*For thine if the kingdom, the power, the glory forever and ever.*

Yes it is his kingdom and we’re a part of it. It’s not a Hail Mary Prayer. A last desperation prayer. No. It’s a prayer that says we are in it with God. Soon we will say it together. Let’s focus on what we are really praying.

Amen- Let it be so.