

WHAT

IS

INTERCESSION ?

by Sister Stephen

(This teaching was originally given to a group of intercessors
from the Catholic Charismatic Renewal
in Philadelphia, PA. USA during October of 1983.)

OPENING PRAYER

+ In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Almighty Father, we thank You that You have called us here together today. Speak to us, call us according to Your Holy Will, and form us so that we might intercede with Our Lord Jesus before Your Throne for Your People. We ask You to fill us with Your Holy Spirit. Open our hearts and minds and minister to us, Father, with Your Word that we might bring You great Glory. Come, Holy Spirit! Praise you, Lord Jesus, Praise you, Father! Alleluia! Amen.

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PROLOGUE

Some years ago, when Sister Stephen Culhane visited and talked to me about the work of the **Catholic Charismatic Intercessors of the Fellowship of the Burning Bush**, I responded after listening to her carefully:

"Sister, the intercession is the essence itself of the the Church. The Church is Christ, and Christ is The Intercessor yesterday, today, and forever. We do not have another Christ that will reconcile us with the Father but the One Who lives interceding for us in His Own Glorious Existence and Who, from the Father, gives to us His Holy Spirit, the Spirit of New Life. Therefore, to speak of intercession in the Church, is to speak of what His Own Essence as Body of Christ is; even more, as the Christ that the Church is, and that makes Her Lord present in history and in the world." (2 Corinthians 5: 18-19; Romans 5: 10; Colossians 1: 20, 22).

I must confess that in that conversation, I understood more clearly that the intercession prayer is an essential condition, so that the Church will accomplish its mission of salvation of men and women of all nations and of all times.

The work of the **Catholic Charismatic Intercessors of the Fellowship of the Burning Bush** makes reference to this fact, recognized from the beginning in the Church, of the presence and action of the **charismas** that the Holy Spirit gives to the Church for its own edification so that it will fulfill its mission efficiently. The "Catholic Charismatic Intercessors of the Fellowship of the Burning Bush" make an effort to convert intercession to a permanent prayer, lived in community and in groups interrelated by the bonds of charity, within the unity of the Catholic and Apostolic Church. The charisma of the intercession prayer takes place in the communion of a life of prayer nourished by the Fire of the Love of God.

In my opinion, the work of the **Catholic Charismatic Intercessors of the Fellowship of the Burning Bush** provides something new to the mystic experience of the Church. In our times, it is one more manifestation of the permanent Pentecost in which the Church is immersed. It is like a strength that renews, a wind, a fire, a shaking that seeks to renew the conscience of the missionary power and sanctifying power of the intercession prayer in the Church.

+ Francisco Maria Aguilera Gonzalez
Auxiliary Emeritus Bishop of Mexico
México, D.F., June 29, 2001

I. WHAT IS INTERCESSION ?

One day, I was asked to share about intercessory prayer with a large women's prayer group. Before the teaching, we had a time of worship and listening to the Lord. He spoke to us in prophecy and Scripture and song. "Love one another as I have loved you". "You have not chosen Me but I have chosen you." "Go forth and bear fruit, fruit that will last." Someone shared the Scripture, "Ask and you will receive!" Then, we sang the song, "Reach out and touch the Lord as He goes by." During the song, someone received a mental picture. They saw someone reaching up touching Jesus with one hand and with the other hand reaching out and touching His People. When it was time for the teaching, I asked everyone who had ever prayed intercessory prayer to raise his or her hands. Only a few hands went up. And then I asked, "Have any of you ever prayed for anyone else?" Every hand went up then. The people didn't seem to realize that "praying for someone else" could be called "intercession".

WHAT IS INTERCESSION?

Intercession means to go "in between". In intercessory prayer, we go in between God and His people (like that mental picture someone received of the person reaching up touching Jesus with one hand and then reaching out touching His People with the other hand).

Sometimes people come up to us and say, "Will you please pray for me?" When someone asks us to pray for them, this is a special invitation from them to intercede, to go "in between" them and God. However, ultimately, God is the One who really calls us to intercede. Today, as we study some Scriptures on intercession, let us do this as if God were the One asking us the question, "Will you pray for Me?" And see what it means if He were the One inviting us to intercede.

II. GOD CALLS INTERCESSORS

Throughout the Scriptures, God "calls" people to be intercessors. He really wants intercessors. He is actually looking for intercessors.

For example, in Ezekiel 22, we find the Children of Israel in bondage in Babylon and the Glorious Temple in Jerusalem completely destroyed ... one of the worst disasters in all history. One day the Lord was talking with Ezekiel, trying to explain why this terrible disaster happened. The Lord begins by listing all the crimes and sins of Israel and Jerusalem. When God repeats Himself, that is **SERIOUS!!** Here God is repeating Himself *30 TIMES* as He lists all the sins of Israel! The situation was **EXTREMELY SERIOUS!** Because of these sins, God's People Israel were in exile in Babylon. Then in Ezekiel 22: 30, the Lord says something very interesting. "*I have been looking for someone among them to build a wall and man the breach in front of Me, to defend the country and prevent Me from destroying it; but I have not found anyone.*" God was looking for just one person from that nation ... one person who would do the work of intercession. *Just one person could have changed the whole history of Israel by their intervention of intercession between God and His People...* even preventing God from acting out of His just anger. But God says He could not even find one intercessor. He continues on to say that because of this, He had to let the people experience the consequences of their sins. Isn't it amazing how God thinks of intercessors!

In Ezekiel 33:2, the Lord again is speaking to Ezekiel, "Son of man, speak to the members of your nation. Say to them, 'When I send the sword against a country, the people of that country select one of themselves and post him as a sentry or a watchman.'" (Watchman or sentry is another name for intercessor.) "Son of man, *I have appointed you as the sentry or the watchman to the House of Israel. Whenever you hear a word from Me, warn them in My Name.*" Again, God looks for and appoints intercessors.

In the Book of Job, we have some beautiful examples of both

the meaning of intercession and God's call to intercession. In Job 9:33 - 34, Job is speaking to God in the midst of a lot of suffering, "There is *no umpire between us* who might lay his hand upon us both, to stay his rod from me or keep away his daunting terrors." Again, in Job 17:3, Job is talking to the Lord, "You yourself must take my *own guarantee* since no one cares to clap his hand on mine. Who is there that will *give surety for me?*" Then Job says, "This I know that my avenger, my redeemer lives, and He, the Last, will take His stand on earth. After my awakening He will set me close to Him and from my flesh, I shall look on God. He whom I shall see *will take my part*. These eyes will gaze on Him and not find Him aloof." (Job 19:25 - 27) Job is speaking here of intercessors and their work; and, ultimately, that God Himself will be THE Intercessor.

In the Book of Isaiah, there are many, many Scriptures on intercession. Isaiah 21: 6 and 8: "This is what the Lord Yahweh has said to me, 'Go and post the watchman and let him report what He has seen.' On a watchtower, Lord, I stand all day and at my post I keep guard all night." Isaiah 64:7: "No one invokes Your Name, allows himself to catch hold of you". Is. 59:15: the Lord says, "Yahweh has seen this and is indignant that there is no justice to be seen. He saw there was no one and wondered there was no one to intervene. So He made His own arm His mainstay, His own integrity His support." Again in Isaiah 63: 5 the Lord is speaking, "I looked but there was no one to help. I was appalled but there was no one to uphold; so My Own Arm brought Me victory and My Wrath upheld Me."

INDIVIDUALS RESPOND TO GOD'S CALL

Throughout the Scriptures, we see individuals who have responded to God's call for intercession like Ezekiel, whom the Lord Himself appointed to be a "watchman", a "sentry for the house of Israel". These titles are names for 'the intercessor' in the Scriptures.

Moses is another mighty intercessor. He is a wonderful example of what happens when an intercessors responds to God's call

to intercede even when he doesn't know what is really happening. Remember the time when Moses was on the mountain with God and the children of Israel were worshipping the golden calf. God saw what was happening, but Moses did not know. Psalm 106: 23 summarizes what happened: "Therefore, (God) said He would destroy them had not Moses, His chosen one, stood in the breach before Him to turn away His wrath from destroying them." As a result of this intercession of Moses, the Scriptures go on to tell us that God changed His mind and refrained from destroying His People.

We could name many other intercessors from the Scriptures. In fact every person whom God called and who faithfully served Him among His people was first of all someone who knew and worshipped God and who was an intercessor for the people they served.

JESUS

However, as we heard in some of the Scriptures, like Isaiah, the Lord says He looked and He found no one who could really intervene. And "so He made His Own Arm His mainstay, His Own Arm His support." (Isaiah 59:15) The Lord Jesus is the Right Arm of the Father. Jesus is the One who has perfectly fulfilled everything God needs and wants in an intercessor. And even now He continues to answer that call.

In Isaiah 53, the Holy Spirit gives a description of the passion and death of Jesus. This is 500 years before it happened and yet the Scripture is very true about what actually happened to Him. Toward the end of Isaiah 53, He says that "(Jesus) surrendered Himself to death, letting Himself be taken for a sinner, while He was bearing the faults of many and praying all the time for sinners." The whole time Jesus was going through His passion and death He was interceding for sinners. But Jesus not only was praying. He was *living* the experience of intercession. Going between God and His people, Jesus became sin, taking the consequences of sin, holding back ... driving back God's Wrath, deflecting God's Anger from all mankind on the

cross. At the same time, He fought in personal combat with Satan, claiming the absolute victory over all as He rose from the dead. And so His whole passion and death and resurrection is a complete work of intercession.

St. Paul tells us in Hebrews 9:24 that after Jesus Christ died, He rose from the dead and “entered Heaven itself so that He could appear in the actual presence of God on our behalf.” Romans 8:34: “Christ Jesus not only died for us, He rose from the dead and there at God's right hand He stands and pleads for us.” Again, in Hebrews 7: 25: "His power to save is utterly certain since He is living forever to intercede for all who come to God through Him." For two thousand years, ever since Jesus went back to the Father, He has been interceding for us.

These Scriptures say some important things to us about our work of intercession. For example, sometimes we may go before the Lord and feel pretty much alone praying for people. However, if we realize Jesus has already been praying, we are not the first one on the scene when we come to the Father to pray for someone. Jesus has already been praying. And we actually are called to the very special privilege to join with Him, the Perfect Intercessor before the Father, in interceding for other people.

GOD CALLS US TO INTERCEDE

God calls us to join with Jesus in intercession. St. Paul says " I am suffering now, and in my own body, to do what I can to make up all that has still to be undergone by Christ for the sake of His Body, the Church." (Colossians 1: 24) Jesus actually won the victory for us on the cross, but we know it does not show up everywhere yet. And so the call from God, in intercession, is to join with Jesus in His work of going in - between God and man, bringing His Victory into the situations in peoples lives right now. It's actually like a partnership with Jesus where we are standing in the Victory of Jesus for one another, and then, directing that Victory of Jesus into one another's lives through our intercession prayer.

Do you remember some of those Scriptures that I shared at the beginning of this teaching, which we received in the woman's prayer meeting? For example, "Love one another as I have loved you!" That is an invitation from God to love one another like Jesus did by entering in to union with Him. Or, as St. Paul says, to share with Him in His suffering and in the work of intercession which was happening while He was suffering. That is how we can love one another like Jesus loved us. In 1 Corinthians 12, we find a beautiful description of how this sharing actually works in the Body of Christ, how the Holy Spirit makes Jesus the Lord of His Body and gives us a share in His Gifts and His Ministry. 1 Corinthians 12:26 especially says, "If one part is hurt, all parts are hurt with it. If one part is given special honor all parts enjoy it." We have a communion with one another through Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit in the Body of Christ. Whatever one person does actually affects the whole Body of Christ. Sometimes we may not feel this reality, we may not really be aware of this experience. But this is actually happening in the spiritual order of things. And as we pray for one another, the Lord begins to show us and even allow us to experience the burden that one another has. As we intercede, we can open the way for Jesus' Victory to come forth in the lives of others. St. Paul encourages us in Galatians 6: 2: "Bear one another's burdens and so you will fulfill the Law of Christ"; which is, to:

“Love one another as I have loved you.” (John 13: 34; 15: 12)

People often try to explain intercession in many different ways. I love the example that's sometimes used to explain an intercessor where an intercessor is compared to a magnifying glass. Perhaps you have seen young people take a magnifying glass and focus light through that glass on to a piece of paper. All that light is focused in on one spot and it burns a hole right through the paper. An intercessor is like that magnifying glass. What happens in intercession is that all the intercessors are focusing the Power of God on "one spot": the intention they are praying for. This example says a number of things to us.

First, it says that it would be good for the intercessor to be in the Lord's Hands, so when we are praying, He can focus us to where He wants to work right now. Think what could happen if many magnifying glasses are united and all focused on the same spot. The Lord promised us, "If two or three of you are together in My Name I am with you. "I am with you always." But the Lord doesn't only want to just be with us. He wants us to be one with Him. "Make your home in Me as I make Mine in you." (John 15:4) There is a way God has given us to enter into His Presence and deeply into union with Him. That way is through praise and worship. (Psalm 100:4) And when we enter into union with Him, then He can share with us the intentions that He wants us to pray for specifically. Think what could happen as together we are *united with the Lord* in our prayer. What mighty things we will see happen even as He promised.

Second, this example of the magnifying glass says that if the light is going through our glass that glass needs to be clean. As we come close to the Lord, especially through praise and worship, He will show us any area that is not right with Him or one another. A call to real repentance happens in the midst of deep praise and worship as the Lord shows us very clearly what we need to do to be in right relationship with Him and others --- what needs to be cleaned spiritually.

Third, the power of the magnifying glass makes a difference. A powerful magnifying glass or a weak magnifying glass affects the intensity of the light going through. In relation to intercession, the Lord showed us how fasting helps make that glass more powerful. Somehow in fasting, we come into a relationship of deeper dependence on the Lord rather than dependence on external things even for our strength and our support. We come into a relationship with Him where we are drawing more completely on His strength. And when we are in that deeper kind of relationship with the Lord, our prayers are more powerful, because His power is more free to work through us.

SAINT RAPHAEL

Intercession is so important to the Lord that in Revelations He says that He has a special angel whose main job is to work in intercession. Rev. 8:3-4, "Another angel who had a golden censor came and stood at the altar. A large quantity of incense was given to him to offer with the prayers of all the saints on the golden altar that stood in front of the throne. And so from the angel's hand the smoke of the incense went up in the Presence of God and with it the prayers of all the saints." Who is that angel? In the Book of Tobit, the Archangel Raphael has been sent to care for Tobit and his family. St. Raphael says this just before he leaves them, "You must know that when you and Sara were at prayer, it was I who offered your supplications before the Glory of the Lord and who read them. I am Raphael, one of the seven angels who stand ever ready to enter the presence of the Glory of the Lord." (Tobit 12: 12)

III. WHAT DOES GOD WANT US TO PRAY FOR?

Now what does God want us to intercede or pray for? An intercessor is someone that God calls “to stand in the breach”. What are the “breaches” where we can “stand spiritually” and intercede for others? As I have been going through the Scriptures, I have found three main kinds of breaches, three main kinds of spiritual conditions, where God invites us to pray. There are other intentions too that don't quite fit in with these three categories, but generally these are three main categories that I have found repeating in the Scriptures.

BREACH CAUSED BY SIN

First, is the breach that's caused by sin.

In Isaiah 59:2, the Lord is speaking, "Your iniquities have made a gulf between you and your God". Isaiah 30:3 to 14: "Your guilt will prove to be for you a breach on the point of collapse, the bulge at the top of the city wall which suddenly and all at once comes crashing down irretrievably shattered, smashed like an earthenware pot; so that, of the fragments, not one chard remains big enough to carry a cinder from the hearth or scoop water from the cistern." Ephesians 2:1 – 3: "You were dead through the crimes and the sins in which you used to live when you were following the way of this world, obeying the ruler who governs the air, the spirit who is at work in the rebellious. We all were among them too, in the past, living sensual lives, ruled entirely by our own physical desires and our own ideas, so that, by nature, we were as much under God's anger as the rest of the world."

We see in these Scriptures that there is a definite gap, a breach, a gulf between God and us because of sin. This is primarily because of original sin - a condition inherited by all mankind. But a breach also happens when we personally sin, even after we've come to know the Lord. Something happens through sin that causes our relationship with the Lord to be cut.

What the Lord desires for us is not this distance between Him

and us. He wants us to have Eternal Life. He wants us to enter into and experience His Kingdom. He wants us to live in His Will and in His Family forever.

+ + +

Now remember, we said earlier that Jesus was the One Who most perfectly bridged every gap between God and us. And here in this situation of the breach caused by sin, Jesus bridges the gap by His death, by the outpouring of His Blood. In 2 Corinthians 5: 21, St. Paul says, "For our sake, God made the Sinless One into sin so that in Him we might become the Goodness of God, so we might be reconciled to God." And John 1: 12 says, "To all who did accept Him (meaning Jesus), He gives power for us to become children of God." This means that we're no longer cut off from the Lord but we actually share in God's Life and become His children through Jesus Christ.

All the way through Isaiah 53:1 to 12, we see how Jesus took upon Himself all sin, "We had all gone astray like sheep, each taking His own way, and Yahweh burdened Him with the sins of all of us." Isaiah 53: 5 says, "on Him lies the punishment that brings us peace and through His wounds we are healed." We already shared about another part of Isaiah 53, where as Jesus was suffering on the cross, the entire time He was praying for sinners. And God promises in Isaiah 53: 10 that "because He has offered His Life in atonement, He shall see His heirs, He shall have a long life and through Him what Yahweh wishes will be done." Alleluia!

Ephesians 2: 5 and 6: "God loved us with so much love that He was generous with His Mercy. When we were dead through our sins, He brought us to Life with Christ ... it is through grace that you have been saved ... and He has raised us up with Him (Jesus Christ) and given us a place with Him in Heaven, in Christ Jesus." Eph. 2: 13 continues, "Now in Christ Jesus, you that used to be so far apart from us ... " (when we are separated from God we are also separated from one another) " ... through Jesus you have been brought very close by the Blood of Christ, for He is the peace between us, and has made the

two into one, and broken down the barrier that used to keep them apart, actually destroying in His own person the hostility caused by the rules and decrees of the law. This was to create one single new man in Himself out of the two of them. And by restoring peace through the cross, to unite them both in a single body and reconcile them with in God. In His own Person He killed hostility” ... or the enmity ... which is the result of sin. There is enmity, hostility between God and man because of sin. It's part of the consequences of sin. But Jesus has bridged that gap in His own Person.

+ + +

The Lord calls us to join in intercession for other people who are in the state of sin, to walk into that breach caused by sin, with Jesus.

The first letter of John 5:16 says this, "If anyone sees his brother commit a sin, which is not a deadly sin, he has only to pray and God will give Life to the sinner." He goes on to say that "every kind of wrongdoing is sin." How do we respond when we see one another in sin? Do we talk about them with other people and tell all the things that we've seen them doing? Or do we point the finger in an unforgiving, judgmental, condemning kind of way and say "See, there they go again." That is not God's way of dealing with this kind of situation. He says, "If anyone sees his brother commit a sin that is not a deadly sin, he has only to pray and God will give Life to the sinner." Now I am not sure what he means here by "deadly sin". But what I think of when I read this passage is that no matter what the sin is, God is the one who judges whether it is deadly or not, whether it is going to lead to eternal damnation or not. It is for us to respond with prayer, to intercede, so that God might give Life and free others from the bondage of sin and death.

We see a wonderful example of this kind of intercession in Acts 7:60 with Saint Stephen. Remember when Stephen was being stoned to death, St. Paul was standing right there, and the people who were stoning Stephen laid their cloaks at Saul's feet. Saul was in total

agreement with this murder. But listen to Stephen's prayer. "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." It was sin that they were committing, even though they didn't realize it at the time and thought they were doing what was right. St. Stephen's prayer, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them" is the kind of prayer that we can pray when we see our brothers in sin. And look at God's answer in Acts. 9: the conversion of St. Paul. ALLELUIA!

Jesus Himself tells us to pray for our enemies and those who hate us. Many times people who are our enemies are sinning against us. If we do what the Lord says and pray for them, we are going to start seeing fruit like that of St. Stephen's prayer.

Another example of standing in the kind of breach caused by sin is in Galatians 4:19. St. Paul has just been talking to the Galatians, appealing to them not to lose what God has given them. He says, "My children, I must go through the pain of giving birth to you all over again until Christ is formed in you." St. Paul is talking here about a work of intercession. Those of you who are mothers know the experience you go through when you give birth to your children. St. Paul is saying that there is an experience in the Holy Spirit of a travail and agony that someone goes through in intercession until Jesus Christ is born in others. The spiritual processes of going from spiritual death to Spiritual Life, of being "raised up" with Christ, of being born into the Kingdom of God or into a new level in the Kingdom of God, that process where Christ is formed in others needs an important kind of intercession that we can do - the work of spiritually giving birth to others in the Jesus Christ through travailing prayer. We need especially to pray for those who do not know the Lord and who are in original sin so that they might be born into Christ. And, in a sense, we are "mothering" them in the Spirit to birth in the Lord. This kind of intercession in the Holy Spirit is urgently needed today, to prepare the way for the work of evangelization for people in every nation of the world and even in the Church.

BREACH CAUSED BY LEFT-OVER EFFECTS OF SIN

A second kind of breach or situation where we can intercede is in the breach that's caused by the leftover effects of sin in our lives. Many people experience this breach more deeply after the baptism in the Holy Spirit. They have just committed their lives deeply to the Lord and everything has been going along fine. Then, all of a sudden, some of those old bad habits start coming back again. And they say, "O Lord, I thought all this was supposed to be taken care of when I gave my life to You!" And they seem to go on and on in this process of purification, with so many things that need to change, that are not what the Lord wants. There's a gap between what they are now and what God really has for them, that wholeness of person where they have the Mind and the Heart of Jesus, where they are in God's Will and are doing God's Will in God's Way.

In Isaiah 40:4, there's a description of this kind of human condition. The Lord says in verse 4, "Let every valley be filled in, every mountain and hill be laid low, let every cliff become a plain and the ridges a valley, then the Glory of Yahweh shall be revealed and all mankind shall see it." Spiritually speaking, these mountains and these valleys may be places inside of us where we need inner healing, mountains of pride that need to be humbled before God, or shriveled places of emptiness in us where we never grew properly in the Lord's Way. Through the process of repentance, conversion, and inner healing which the Lord works in us, these spiritual mountains are brought low and these spiritual valleys are filled in. That may even mean deliverance sometimes because the enemy might have a stronghold in some area of our lives. We may even need to be prayed with by others to be set free from these spiritual bondages. (The Sacrament of Confession is a very special gift from God through which God very powerfully works in our lives for repentance, conversion, deliverance, and inner healing.)

In the Prophet Malachi, the Holy Spirit is described as the refiner's fire. This is what Malachi 3: 3 says about the Holy Spirit: "He is like the refiner's fire and the fuller's alkali. He will take His seat as refiner and purifier. He will purify the sons of Levi and refine

them like gold and silver, and then they will make the offering to Yahweh as it should be made."

Have you ever seen those shows on TV where they show you how metal is purified? How gold is purified? Someone takes raw gold and puts it in a big pot. Then they put it in a great furnace. When the material gets really hot, it starts to spin around and all the impurities are thrown out. What's left is pure gold.

Now the Lord wants us to be pure gold. Many of the trials and challenges and sufferings that we go through are His process of purification. Sometimes we seem to go through the same things over and over again. That is because there is something that has to happen in us before the Lord can grow us and go on to the next step in the spiritual growth process of our spiritual life. And until that particular foundation stone is put in place in our spiritual house, the Lord can't go on to the next level. So He has to repeat the lesson until we really learn it. If you see something continually coming up in your life, go to the Lord and say: "Lord, what are you trying to teach me, so I can cooperate with You and we can go on". He will show you. Our God is a Holy God, and in order to be in His presence and live with Him forever, we need to be holy as well. Otherwise, we couldn't stand it. Nothing unholy can stand to be in the presence of the Holy One. And so it is really important for us to pray for one another, so we can enter deeper into His Holiness. We need to cover the process of purification and transformation in one another with our prayers.

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Jesus prayed in this second kind of breach in Luke 22:31-32 for Peter. He said to Peter, "Satan has got his wish, that he can sift you all like wheat. But I have prayed for you, that when you have turned again (when you have repented) then you will strengthen the brothers." We know that Peter denied Jesus, but he did repent and became the chief shepherd of the Church, the first physical representative of the Lord Jesus on the earth. Jesus had interceded for Peter in this situation, where he was tempted to sin, and though he

fell, and he came back to the Lord.

+ + +

Jesus' prayer for Peter in Luke 22: 31-32 is a powerful example to us. We can watch and pray for one another in the same way as Jesus did so that others will not fall in the face of temptation but stand firm in the Lord. And if they do fall, we can pray that they might have the grace of repentance, and be able to return again to the Lord.

In Matthew 26:41, Mark 13:33 and 14:36, and Luke 21:36; 22:40 and 46, Jesus tells us clearly to "watch and pray", so that we will not enter into temptation. Prayer can prepare us to stand in the face of temptation. And when we pray for one another, we can pray for this same grace for them. St. Paul prays this way in some of his epistles, for instance in Ephesians 6:18; in Colossians 1:9-12 and 4:12; and in 2 Thessalonians 1:1-12.

In John 11, we have the story of Lazarus. Before Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead, He intercedes deeply in travailing intercession ... "Jesus wept." Then He proclaims the answer, the victory, the miracle the Father gave Him. And He calls forth Lazarus from the dead. After Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead, He says something very interesting. John 11: 41-42 says that the dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with bands of stuff and a cloth round his face. Jesus said to the people: "Unbind him, and let him go free". One of the gifts that the Lord has given us, with the Gift of the Holy Spirit, is in the words of Jesus Himself, "whatever you bind on earth is bound, what ever you loose on earth is loosed in heaven as well." Do you remember that? Now we usually attribute this gift only to the priesthood and the Sacrament of Confession. However, this gift is for all God's People, because we all share in the priesthood of Jesus by our Baptism. And we can bind up one another or we can set one another free. We can also bind up the enemy and loose the Holy Spirit and God's Grace. What Jesus is saying in John's Gospel about Lazarus, is an invitation that we can think of in terms of intercession.

To “unbind one another” spiritually is a work that we do in intercession prayer.

In James 5:16, the Holy Spirit speaks about calling upon the elders of the Church to come and pray for someone who is sick. And He talks here about both spiritual and physical healing. People who know the Lord may still have these healing needs in their life. Whenever we pray over one another for healing, we are standing in the gap between someone and the Lord, for whatever they need, whether it is physical healing or inner healing. However, the prayer and anointing for intercession is *NOT* the same as the prayer and anointing for healing. For those in the ministry of healing, intercession prayer can serve as a support and precursor to the actual prayer for healing of the person they are praying over. Intercessors can pray in a focused kind of intercession for the person others are ministering to with healing prayer. Thus intercession can join with another ministry, like healing, to bridge the gap caused by the left-over effects of sin in the lives of our brothers and sisters in Christ and open the way for them to receive all the Lord has for them in His Great Mercy.

BREACH CAUSED BY INCOMPLETION

The third kind of breach where we can intercede is the breach caused by the incompleteness of the establishment of God’s Kingdom and the fulfillment of His Whole Plan. This is the spiritual condition between where we are right now and what God has for all mankind in His Full Plan of Salvation. God wants to reveal His Glory in the earth and bring all home to live with Him forever. Although the Lord Jesus has won the complete victory and fulfillment of God’s Plan, it is not yet fully visible in the earth. This is the breach of incompleteness.

Individuals experience this incompleteness in their lives, because God has a Perfect Will, a personal Plan for each one that is still in process of being actualized in their lives. Families, whole churches, prayer groups, and even nations are also still in the same process toward the completion of all God desires for them. In Romans 8:19,

the Lord says this: “the whole creation is eagerly waiting for God to reveal His Sons.” In 1 Corinthians 15: 24-28, St Paul speaks about the time when Jesus will come back at the end of the world. He says: “After that, the end will come, when (the Lord Jesus) hands over the Kingdom to God the Father, having done away with every sovereignty, authority, and power. For He must be King until He has put all His enemies under His feet, and the last of the enemies to be destroyed is death. For everything is to be put under His feet. Though, when it is said that everything is subjected, this clearly cannot include the One Who subjected everything to Him. And when everything is subjected to Him, then the Son Himself will be subjected in His turn to the One who subjected all things to Him, so that God may be all in all.” (1 Corinthians 15: 28)

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Ephesians 1:7-10 reveals the Father’s Plan, His desire for us that we all may be one in Christ. Jesus prayed this for us at the Last Supper. Do you remember His beautiful prayer in John 17? This is Jesus great prayer of intercession. (Read the whole prayer sometime.) But for now, look at Jesus’ Words in verse 21, which He repeats throughout this prayer in a number of ways, “May they all be one. Father, may they be one in Us, as You are in Me and I am in You, so that the world may believe it was You who sent Me.” The Father wants us to be one with Him in the Holy Trinity, and we are not totally there yet. And so part of our work of intercession is to intercede that this might become a reality. Remember in Romans 8:34, how Jesus stands before the Father, interceding for us? Jesus Himself is continuing this same work of intercession until all that the Father desires comes to pass. (Romans 8:28 - 30)

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We are called to intercede in this breach of incompleteness too. For instance, in Isaiah 62:6-7, the Lord says, “On your walls, Jerusalem, I set watchmen. Day or night they must never be silent. You who keep Yahweh mindful must take no rest, nor let Him take

rest till He has restored Jerusalem and made her the boast of the earth.” In 2 Corinthians 13:9, St Paul says this: “What we ask in our prayers is for you to be made perfect.” Many times in St. Paul’s Epistles, especially if you look in the beginnings of them, St. Paul is telling how he has been praying for the people that he is writing to. And continually he prays that the Father will show them what His full plan is, that He will give them Revelation, and give them strength and courage to be faithful until that full plan comes to completion.

In Acts 1, Jesus told the disciples to “go and pray” until they received the Promise of the Father. Their intercession for Pentecost, and our intercession for a new Pentecost, is a prayer that God will bring His full Glory into the earth. The Holy Spirit is the Glory of God. The Holy Spirit purifies us and makes us like Jesus. And when the Holy Spirit is really fully alive and working in the Body of Christ, the Glory of God will be revealed in us (Colossians 3: 4).

The Lord really wants this to happen. Many of us have heard His Desire in the prophecies that have been coming over the years in different groups and events, for example that He is about to pour out His Spirit in Power and Glory in the Church in a way that we have never seen. In 1983 at the conference for prayer group leaders, in Steubenville, Ohio, USA, the Lord made this promise, and He also said that “intercession will open the way for the wave to begin” the wave of His Glory that is about to sweep through His Church and sweep through the earth. Our intercession is important. We are called by God to pray for the out-pouring of the Holy Spirit in the Church and in the whole world. 2 Peter 3:12, St. Peter says “we should pray to hasten the coming of the Lord.”

OTHER INTENTIONS

The Lord recommends many other intentions to us in the Scriptures. I would like to share just two more intentions for right now. In our time in history, 2 Chronicles 7:14, has been a specific prayer intention God has been giving to intercessors praying for America and for India. He wants us to pray that the grace of

repentance will be poured out on America and India, so we will turn back to Him as Lord of our nations and Lord of our lives, so that He might heal our lands and other lands through us.

The Lord also asks us to pray for more missionaries, and to cover present missionaries with our prayers. I think that it is significant that Jesus sent out the disciples two by two. I know in our own experience of going out two by two as missionaries, when one is ministering, the other is praying. And so the work of intercession is continually there, backing up the ministry.

In the Book of Nehemiah, the Lord teaches this principle of how intercession and ministry go together. Here God's people were working to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. They worked with one hand and had their swords in the other hand ready for battle. Nehemiah and the people of Israel were defending themselves against visible enemies. However, what happened to them is a parable for us of the importance of watchmen, or intercessors, in the spiritual warfare that we are in as we work to build the Kingdom of God and bring in the Harvest of God.

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So far, in our study on intercession, we see that throughout the Scriptures, God calls intercessors. And even in the process of calling them, He describes what He wants intercessors to do. He gives them names to describe their work: the Watchman, or Lookout. They are like the pioneer who blazes a trail or like the scout who goes on ahead of the wagon train of God's people; one who stands in the breach and goes between God and man; an umpire; someone who gives themselves as surety for someone else, "who takes my part", like Job says; or one who builds a wall to "deflect God's anger" from coming against His People; a two-way pipeline, through whom the needs of all God's People go up to the Father, and through whom God's blessings come down to His People. Sometimes, I like to think of intercessors, especially when they pray in the spiritual warfare, as the "Green Berets" of God's Army. These troops are highly skilled.

They are on the front lines, and they go before God's People to prepare and make a way for the others to come through.

We especially see in the Scriptures that Jesus is the One Who is The Perfect Intercessor, and He continues to stand before the Father and intercede for us. Every intercessor is really called to join in a partnership with Jesus in His Divine Work of Intercession.

Also, we have found that there are certain things God wants us to pray for - certain situations where He wants us to pray - different kinds of breaches where we can stand in intercession. A real intercessor is not someone who goes to God to get his or her prayers answered. An intercessor, in God's way of thinking, is someone who comes into relationship with Him: who really wants to serve Him and His People. And then, with the Lord Jesus, they begin to follow him and work with Him in intercession. This means that they (we) need to be willing and open to pray for whoever God wants, and to follow Him and pray the way God wants us to pray so that His Glory can be revealed ... so that "His Kingdom can come and His Will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven."

IV. LEVELS OF INTERCESSION

The Lord also calls people to different levels of intercession. These levels of intercession depend on His Call and the kind or degree of commitment and seriousness of commitment that a person makes with the Lord.

BASIC CHRISTIAN CALL

First, in the Lord Jesus Christ, all Christians are called to be intercessors, to pray for one another. Because we share in the Life of the Lord Jesus, we also share in His Divine Ministry, what He is doing right now ... intercession. In fact, one sign of spiritual maturity in Christ is that attitude people have when they begin to forget themselves and pray for one another. St. Paul speaks about this call that all Christians have to intercede. He says: “my advice is,” (he is speaking to all Christians here) “first of all, there should be prayers offered for everyone, petitions, intercessions and thanksgiving, and especially for kings and others in authority, so that we may be able to live religious and reverent lives in peace and quiet. To do this is right and will please God our Savior. He wants everyone to be saved and reach the full knowledge of the truth.”

Later St. Paul continues, “in every place then I want the men to lift their hands up reverently in prayer, with no anger or argument.” (1 Timothy 2:1-4 and 8) The Lord asks all of us, to come to Him and intercede with a right heart. I was thinking, in reading this Scripture, how the Holy Mass is such a powerful and most beautiful prayer of intercession. In the Holy Mass, we gather up all the needs of all the people of the earth and bring them before the Father through, with, and in the Lord Jesus, our Righteousness, Who is actually present right here with us in the Holy Eucharist. Someone once told me there are four Masses starting somewhere in the world every second. And so, no matter when we are interceding, we can always join with the Lord Jesus in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass wherever it is being offered, and have the whole prayer of the Church with us, or us with the Church in our intercession prayer.

When we pray we need to realize that through the Holy Spirit we really are all united. You remember that when the Lord taught the disciples, and us, how to pray He said, “when you pray, say, ‘Our Father’.” Here the Lord reminds us that we don’t come to God alone, we come to God with everybody else in His Family. Also, in this prayer, Our Lord Jesus teaches us to pray for one another together.

St. Paul encourages us to “bear one another’s burdens and so you will fulfill the Law of Christ.” (Galatians 6:2) What is the “Law of Christ”? Jesus says, “Love one another as I have loved you”. That commandment is for everyone in the Church. And intercession is an important and essential way to carry out this Command of the Lord.

In several places in the Scriptures, the Lord talks about the effectiveness of our work of united intercession. As we read these Scriptures keep in mind that our work of intercession is often a spiritual warfare. The Lord talks about how He will give peace to His people when they come into His Promised Land, if they obey His laws and commandments. And they will find security in the land. Then He says: “The sword shall not pass through your land, you shall pursue your enemies and they shall fall before your sword. Five of you pursuing 100 of them, 100 pursuing 10,000 and your enemies shall fall before your sword.” (Leviticus 26:8)

In Job 33:23-26, the Lord says: “If there be for him an angel, a mediator, one of a thousand to declare to men what is right for him; and he is gracious to him and says, ‘deliver him’, (This is a prayer of intercession.) ‘deliver him from going down into the pit. I have found a ransom, let his flesh become flesh with youth, let him return to the days of his youthful vigor.’ Then man prays to God and He accepts him, he comes into His presence with joy.” The Lord is saying for us that one man can intercede for a thousand, five in this work of spiritual warfare for a hundred, or a hundred for ten thousand. When we come before the Lord our effectiveness, our authority, our responsibility in prayer is not for just one person, but it covers many people. This is a little glimpse of God’s economy in intercession.

When we join together in prayer, the Lord Himself gives an effectiveness by His Presence that is even greater than we can imagine. Listen to Moses in Deuteronomy 32:30 - 31. Here Moses has been proclaiming the greatness of Yahweh. He alone is the Rock, the Foundation of Israel and His Source of Victory is the end of everything. Moses says this: “How else, could one man rout a thousand, how could two put a 10,000 to flight were it not that their rock has sold them? That Yahweh had delivered them up. But their rock is not like our Rock; our enemies are no intercessors.” He is saying here that truly God's Ways are far beyond our ways. He enables victory. And the enemies of Israel are not intercessors because they do not know God. They have no Real God to pray to. In fact, they don't even know who to pray to. There is only one God who chooses His Representatives and Who empowers and answers prayers. And He is our God, too. Alleluia!

Finally, St. Paul says something very beautiful in regard to united prayer, “as more grace is received ... more will offer thanksgiving to God.” (2 Corinthians 4: 15) The Lord will receive more Glory as more of us, who are interceding for the same particular intentions, give the Glory back to God for answered prayers.

THE MINISTRY OF INTERCESSION

The Lord calls some people to a level of commitment in intercession that is different and deeper than the basic Christian call: We can call this next level a “ministry” within the Body of Christ. This service of the “ministry” of intercession is a specialized, part-time commitment, because it is usually for a special purpose or for a special project or job for a special time. This level of intercession flows out of a legal relationship with the Lord by which we are commissioned by Him to act in His Name in some specific situation. And when God gives the call for a ministry of intercession, He also gives a special anointing, a special authority, and a special protection for individuals to pray for that specific situation.

For instance, in Galatians 4, we read how St. Paul says that he

is “in travail until Christ is born” in His People. The moment when “Christ is born” is a special moment in the life of people. And there needs to be a special work of “travailing” intercession prayer for this moment of spiritual birth in someone’s life; so that Christ can “be born” in them for the first time, or so that they can be reborn into new levels in Christ. When God calls specific people to intercede for this Grace, and He gives them the anointing of travailing prayer, they enter into a specific ministry of intercession. Once the person they are praying for is “born in Christ”, that ministry of intercession is finished. And then they can move on to other intercession work, perhaps to cover the process by which others grow and come into maturity in Christ.

Another example: In John 11, Jesus interceded for the resurrection of Lazarus and for the faith of all those present so they might be able to receive this mighty miracle. This is an example of the ministry of intercession in the life of Jesus. Then Jesus tells the people to “unbind Lazarus and let him go free.” This was a specific physical work Jesus asked them to do. But the words of Jesus are a kind of parable for us in intercession. There are times when we are praying for others when the Lord leads us to pray to spiritually unbind the spiritual chains that hold His People captive. And this spiritual work of unbinding is part of the ministry of intercession. (Ezekiel 17:8 - 16 and Isaiah 62:6 - 7 give two other examples of the ministry of intercession.)

Sometimes people serve the Lord and His People in special ways for just a short period of time. For example, teachers have a temporary ministry for their students. Teachers have the same students with them in their class for maybe only a year. Part of the teacher’s responsibility, in a spiritual way, for those young people is to intercede for them during that period of time. Also, prayer groups may change their leadership each year. The members of the prayer group may go before the Lord seeking Him in prayer and fasting. And the Lord may point out and raise up those persons He wants to serve in leadership or in other ways for a specific period of time. This is a wonderful opportunity, by the way, for all in the group to grow as new people can come in to leadership and service bringing many new

gifts from the Lord to the prayer groups. During the period of time these new leaders serve, they have a special obligation before the Lord, as part of their temporary pastoral responsibility, to intercede for the people they serve. They are called into a ministry of intercession.

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GIFTS AND MINISTRIES OF HOLY SPIRIT

I would like to comment briefly here on what St. Paul speaks of in his First Letter to the Corinthians, chapter 12: 4-11, regarding charismatic gifts and charismatic ministries of the Holy Spirit. I think sometimes there is a little fuzziness in our thinking about these matters, even as there was in the days of St. Paul. Do you know the difference between gifts and ministries in the Holy Spirit?

The gifts of the Holy Spirit are given to everyone because the Holy Spirit is given to everyone.

THE HOLY SPIRIT IS THE GIFT OF GOD.

What we call “gifts” of the Holy Spirit are like the Hands and Feet and Voice of the Holy Spirit. And the Holy Spirit may want to speak through some in prophecy or words of wisdom or words of knowledge, or tongues, or reach out to touch others in various ways with His other “gifts”, like healing or miracles. These “gifts” are for everyone. They are like the “equipment” that we need to do the Work of God.

There is a big difference between the charismatic gifts and the charismatic ministries God gives to His people in the Holy Spirit. For instance, think of the difference between the charismatic gift of inspired teaching, where we are sharing with others something the Lord reveals to us in the Scripture passage we are reading, and the ministry of being an inspired Scripture teacher in the Body of Christ. Or think of the difference between the charismatic gift of prophecy,

where the Lord can speak to anyone, and the ministry of being a prophet or professional spokesman for God. Also, any Christian can pray for others in intercession, but if you really need serious and effective prayers for someone, you know who to ask ... who has the Lord's Ear because of a ministry of intercession.

A teacher, a prophet, a pastor, a leader of a prayer group, one who is in a healing ministry needs all the gifts of the Spirit to be able to carry on their service in the Spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ. For example, a pastor needs the word of knowledge, he needs the gift of prophecy and words of wisdom, he needs the gift of healing ... he needs all the gifts of the Holy Spirit working through him freely because they are God's tools to do God's work. And the Lord Jesus promised that signs and wonders would accompany the preaching of the Gospel. God has a voice, and He wants to talk to all of us. He wants to give all of us words to speak to one another about what's on His Heart. And He wants to reach out through us to touch others in His Name ... to do what He speaks. We need God. We need to be able to give Jesus to one another in His Way. This is the purpose of every one of the gifts of the Spirit. And the ministries, like intercession, are those specialized areas of service where God can work through us with His Divine Gifts to accomplish His Holy Will in His Divine Way for His Glory.

I would also like to mention here, that in the lists of the ministries in the Bible, there are two ministries that are usually not mentioned. One is the ministry of praise and worship; the other is intercession. Perhaps one reason for this is that, in the Bible, all the other ministries listed there are a service unto God's People. Whereas, the ministry of praise and worship and the ministry of intercession are *UNTO THE LORD* first and then as an overflow through Him unto His People. We also find throughout the Scriptures that these two specific ministries are really the foundation of the life and service of every person in the Bible who was faithful to God, including the Lord Jesus Himself and Our Blessed Mother Mary. As a result of the faithful living these two ministries, everyone in the Scriptures who was faithful to God develops an important characteristic which is essential for intercessors: they all have a heart

that is concerned totally and only for the Glory of God.

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OFFICE OF INTERCESSOR

Another level of intercessor that the Lord gives in the Body of Christ is someone who is a full-time intercessor. This level of committed intercession is a “condition of continuous responsibility” in the Body of Christ, which we can call the “office of intercessor.” This level of intercession flows out of a love relationship with the Lord as that of the bride with the Divine Bridegroom. The intercessors experience a communion with the Lord where He actually begins to live out His Life through them. Those called to this deepest level of intercession have the tremendous responsibility and promise that God gives to His friends, “Whomever you bless, I will bless; whoever you curse, I will curse.”

God is raising up people all over the world today to be full-time intercessors for specific groups, parishes, and, communities and for specific works that are going on. Some of them bear this call to intercession as part of their responsibility with another full-time ministry or vocation. For example, parents have the responsibility for their children 24 hours a day as mother and father, and 24 hours a day as intercessors for their children. And it doesn't matter how old or how young children are. Those of you who are parents have a special authority in God's eyes to pray for your children. And God will hear you. Remember St. Monica praying for St. Augustine many, many years. God heard and answered her prayer, through her perseverance.

We also see the “office of intercessor” together with some other full-time vocations, like the Prophets of the Old Testament: Genesis 20:7, Psalm 106:23 and Ezekiel 33:2. We see this too among the Kings in the Old Testament. For instance, Hezekiah (King of Israel) in II Kings 19 and Jehosaphat (King of Judah) in 2 Chronicles 20 were powerful in their intercession as they exercised the spiritual authority of their political office and called all the people together to

intercede.

Today, the Holy Spirit is raising up people to serve in various full-time apostolates, which are like a second vocation in their lives. (For example, the evangelization of Charles Finney or healing and miracle ministry of Kathryn Kuhlman.) In their lives we find these servants of the Lord spending long agonizing hours in intercession before they minister to others. And the fruit of their prayer is a mighty revelation of God and working of God among His People for a great harvest of souls among the nations for His Glory.

Within His Church, the Lord has also raised up men and women over the centuries whose *PRIMARY* call is to be as one with the Lord, serving Him and His people as full-time intercessor.

Priests, in virtue of their anointing to the priesthood, are ordained to be Jesus among us. Jesus is the Great High Priest who stands before the Father interceding for us. And so priests, just because they are priests, are intercessors in the Lord Jesus full-time for their people. Many of them need to realize more deeply what that means, and learn how to be intercessors. Often, our priests carry around the burdens of their people with them and try to deal with these burdens in just a service kind of way, that is, by what they can say, or what they can do for their people. As a result we often find our priests falling down under these burdens because they have not learned how to carry their burdens to the Lord and pray them through to victory in intercession prayer. Some burdens can only be dealt with in prayer.: “The battle is the Lord’s!” (2 Chronicles 20: 15)

I want to share one Scripture which is a beautiful example of the intercession of a priest. In Wisdom 17, we see a description of the High Priesthood of Aaron and how he was an intercessor when God brought judgment on His People through a serious plague. It says, “He wielded the weapons of his sacred office, prayer and atoning incense.” He was interceding, going in-between God and His people. As he went in-between he was wearing and thus holding up the Promises of God and the Victory of God in the face of a great destruction. He was saying “God, remember Your Mercy, remember

Your Promises to Your People “ just by his physical presence there and the clothes that he wore. He was exercising his office of being a priest. And when he interceded using the weapons of his priesthood, prayer and atoning incense, God heard his prayer and the plague stopped.

Think how much more powerful our priests are in their intercession today, because of the Lord Jesus. As we already mentioned, priests share in the full Priesthood of Jesus Christ because of their ordination, and God will hear their prayers even as He hears the prayers of His Only Son. I think that is another reason why the Holy Mass is such a powerful prayer of intercession. Because Jesus Himself is not only actually present with us Himself in the Holy Eucharist but He also is with us in our priests, interceding for and with us to the Father.

Religious communities, especially those that are contemplative, also have this special mission, given by the Church, to pray for all God’s people. Their whole life is to be consecrated to God to be as worship and intercession with the Lord for His Glory and for His People.

In Colossians, St Paul speaks of someone else who is a full-time intercessor. His name is Epaphrus. Colossians 4:12 says, “Epaphrus, your fellow citizen sends his greeting to the Church of Colossae. This servant of Christ Jesus never stops battling for you, praying that you will never lack, but always hold perfectly and securely to the Will of God”. Epaphrus was a layman who was a full-time intercessor for the people of God in the Church of Colossae. Today the Lord continues to call lay people in this deeper level of full-time intercession. For some, like Epaphrus, it is almost like a second vocation. And we often find these hidden prayer warriors responding to God’s call with a depth of commitment in intercession that is usually found in the contemplative communities.

In this context, I would like to mention a little more about God’s call to be victims with Jesus in intercession for others. This is actually the level of call that the Lord gives for our priests and

religious. Their whole lives are consecrated as victims in intercession for the Church, even if they sometimes don't consciously understand this deeply. However, in virtue of their consecration, whatever they do can immediately bring grace to the whole Church. We remember especially St. Therese, the "Little Flower", who offered her whole life to God as a "Victim of Love" for the Church. She has been named the patroness of the missions even though she never left her monastery, because of her victim intercession. Also, today we remember a new saint who offered her life as a victim for the Church, Sister Faustina of the Divine Mercy. The service of these and so many other saints in the Church was, and still is, a mighty work of intercession.

I mentioned how God is also giving this grace of deeper committed intercession to lay people. For example, in the late 1800's to early 1900's, a wonderful woman of God lived in Mexico, who is now in process of being made a Saint. Her name is Concepcion Cabrera de Armida, also known as "Conchita". She was the mother of nine children and also the foundress of the five "Works of the Cross" in the Church in Mexico. One day, the Lord told her He was looking for some people who would be willing to offer their lives as victims of intercession for the salvation of mankind. The result was the "Works of the Cross". Three of these "Works" are Religious Orders. Two are for lay people. One of the lay groups is called "Apostleship of the Cross". By 1986, over 8,000 people had joined this group. Its intention is to offer in union with Jesus, all works, joys and sufferings for the salvation of mankind, especially priests. "Alliance of Love with the Heart of Jesus" is the other group formed by lay people who have made a serious commitment for a life of intimacy with Jesus, to enlighten the family atmosphere by complying with the responsibilities of their state of life. By being in union with Jesus, everything acquires a priestly dimension, for the glory of God, and thus becomes an intercession with the Lord Jesus for the salvation of all mankind, and especially for priests.

Another modern example we can read of is Rees Howell in "The Intercessor". This holy man of God experienced victim intercession as he actually lived through whatever he was called to

intercede for in the lives of others.

In regard to God's call to be a victim with Jesus, I would like to recommend that you DO NOT ask for this grace. I know some well-meaning people who, for example, see a small child with cancer and they say to God, "Give me the cancer and heal this little child. They have their whole life ahead of them." Then they get sick, too. NO. Even though we mean well, to ask like this to be a victim for someone else, can open the way for the enemy to step in our lives, if this is not the Lord's Will for us. If the Lord does desire to grant us the grace to be victims with Him in intercession for others, this needs careful discernment and spiritual direction. And if God gives the call, He will also give the grace and protection we need to answer that call.

In this context of God's call to be victims in intercession with the Lord Jesus, the Holy Spirit is raising up today a whole new international apostolate of missionary intercession for the Church. This apostolate is called "The Catholic Charismatic Intercessors of the Fellowship of the Burning Bush." (FBB) Intercessors in many countries have joined together to form a local branch of FBB in their nation and to pray deeply as the Holy Spirit leads for the work of the Holy Church. Many of these intercessors have a level of commitment that may be as "victim" intercessors. Each year, the national branches of FBB have joined together in pilgrimage of missionary intercession. As an international "house of prayer", they have visited various nations to pray more deeply together for the whole Church and for the Church in that nation. More and more in these missions and in their local home intercession groups, these FBB intercessors really live the intercession prayer intentions for which they pray. Many really are as "victims" with the Lord Jesus in their missionary service of intercession for the Church.

GLORY TO GOD!!!

FBB missionary intercession is really a "new intercession" for the "new evangelization" and the "new springtime" of the Church

inspired and called for by Our Holy Father Pope John Paul II in this new millennium.

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Some people, then, have a call from God to be full-time intercessors within the Body of Christ as their main service within the Church. We remember our priests, contemplatives, and lay people, like Epaphrus, whom the Lord has raised up to be intercessors for their people in specific places. We also remember those the Lord has called to be full-time intercessors as part of another full-time life and service in the Body of Christ, like parents, and the prophets and kings in the Old Testament.

Whatever kind of intercessor God is calling us to be, whether that call is personal or with others or with missionary apostolates like the Fellowship of the Burning Bush, we need to recognize His Call and respond to it. Our response to the Lord is very important. I remember how earlier this year the Lord led about 200 of us to make a four-month commitment to intercede for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in Albuquerque, New Mexico, USA. At the end of that prayer mission, He showed someone a mental picture describing how He thought of our work of intercession. You cooks will appreciate this. He is showing them a picture of a pressure cooker, with a big piece of meat inside the pot. And the meat was almost done. You know how a pressure cooker concentrates the energy? Well, He showed us that our commitment was like a concentration of prayer power. Because we made the commitment, all the prayer was focused on the special city that we were interceding for. And the meat was like a sign of His Plan for that city. Because of our commitment, His Plan for that city was going to get done sooner than it normally would. **ALLELUIA!**

At the Last Supper, the Lord Jesus gave a very beautiful example for us to follow as He prayed, “Father, the hour has come: glorify Your Son so that Your Son may glorify You; and, through the power over all mankind that You have given Him, let Him give Eternal Life to all those You have entrusted to Him.” (John 17: 1-2)

Here Jesus makes His Own Commitment to the Father according to the call the Father had given Him as The Great High Priest and Victim Intercessor in the glory of the cross. He acknowledges the power and authority the Father has given Him for this mission. And He also intercedes for the release of the fruit of that complete sacrifice, Eternal Life, to flow forth and thus bring the Father Glory.

God still desires to reveal His Father's Glory. In 1983, He gave us a powerful prophetic promise: "As the darkness surrounds you a holy time comes. It will be My pleasure to give you My Glory. Know that it shall be a mighty wave of My Glory. I call you to intercede, for intercession will cause the wave to begin."

V. HOW TO INTERCEDE?

This brings us to the question: How can we intercede?

MANY WAYS TO PRAY AS CHRISTIANS

People pray in many ways. Over the years, you have probably prayed in many ways too. For example: the Rosary is a powerful prayer of intercession, as are the various novena prayers. Then, if you go through Scriptures, you can find many wonderful, anointed prayers. In the Book of Daniel, for instance, some of the people are praying long prayers of supplication, crying out to God for His Mercy. The Liturgy of Hours is based upon the Scriptures and is the official on-going intercession of the Catholic Church. There are many other anointed prayers that people pray drawing from the treasury of prayers of the Church as well as spontaneously praying under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

However, the work of intercession is more than prayers. Intercession is an awesome sharing in the Divine Ministry of Jesus, a partnership with Him as He stands before the Father's Throne pleading for us. The Holy Mass is the greatest of all opportunities we have on earth to pray in intercession, by actually joining in union with Our Lord Jesus, Eucharistically present, Who is living His present Ministry of Intercession in our midst. The Lord Jesus works in so many ways in intercession. If we are going to be in partnership with the Lord Jesus, we need to learn how to work with Him, how to intercede the way He is doing it.

In His life among us, the Lord Jesus did many wonderful things. When we look closely at Jesus and His whole Life, we can see that He had 100% answers to His prayers, 100% fruit in His Ministry. Talk about effectiveness! And Jesus promised us in John 14: 12-14, "What I do, you will do; and even greater things."

Now, I have a question for you:

***How are you doing?
How are you doing with Jesus' expectations of us?***

For example, are you receiving 100% answers in your prayers like Jesus? I am only asking about praying right now. We will talk about raising the dead later!

A PERSON NOT A FORMULA

When I really think about what Jesus did and what He expects of us, I can honestly say, I am definitely NOT receiving the 100% kind of answers to prayer and 100% kind of fruit in ministry like the Lord Jesus. And so I have asked the question,

***How can Jesus expect this of us ...
that we can actually "do what He did"?***

And then I began to wonder ... what did Jesus do? How did He pray? Why did He have 100% answers to His intercessions and ministry?

People say to me. "Oh, Jesus is the Son of God. That is why He had so much fruit in His prayer and ministry. And this is true. The Lord Jesus Christ IS the Only Son of God. **ALLELUIA!**

But the Holy Spirit tells us some interesting things about Jesus. In Hebrews 4:15, He says that Jesus was "like us in every way except sin." Then, in Philippians 2, He says further that Jesus emptied Himself of His Glory as God, of His Power as God, and became a man ... even becoming sin on the cross. Jesus entered into death and hell. PRAISE GOD, He did not stay there! But He took the keys of death and hell and came walking out in the Resurrection with total victory over sin, Satan, and death. And He has been raised up above the angels to stand in front of the Father's throne. And at the Name of Jesus every knee MUST bend in heaven and on earth and under the earth. And every tongue must proclaim to the Glory of God the Father that ...

JESUS CHRIST IS LORD! ALLELUIA!

Now, it is THIS Jesus, Who is so like us, Who said, “What I do you will do.” I thought, there must be something about the Lord Jesus that we have missed. Otherwise, we could do what He said. I wonder what it is? Why did He have 100% answers to His intercessions and ministry? I thought I will have to wait and ask God about these questions when I get to heaven. Do you have some questions like that? ... maybe even a list of questions to ask God about in heaven?

Well, one day I was praying and reading in the Gospel of St. Luke. And you know how sometimes, when we read the Scriptures, one verse may stand out to us and touch our hearts. God can speak to us in this way. Well, I would like to share with you some Scriptures that touched my heart on that day. See if you can hear what I heard in prayer about why Jesus had so many answers, so much fruit in His prayers and ministry.

In the beginning of His Ministry, in St. Luke Gospel, Jesus quotes a Scripture from Isaiah 61. “Jesus unrolls the scroll of the Prophet Isaiah to the place where it is written, ‘The Spirit of the Lord has been given to me for He has anointed me to preach the good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the Year of the Lord’s Favor.’” (Luke 4:18) This was just after Jesus received the baptism of the Holy Spirit at the Jordan River. Over and over again, St. Luke’s Gospel says that it was “in the Power of the Holy Spirit” that Jesus healed this person; “lead by the Holy Spirit” that Jesus visited this town.

As I was pondering these Scriptures, the Lord reminded me of His Words in St. John’s Gospel. Jesus says, “The Son can do nothing by Himself, He can only do what He sees His Father doing.” And again, “I only speak what I hear My Father speaking.”

Now if we think about all of these Scriptures, why do you think that Jesus had so many answers to His Prayer, and so much fruit in His Ministry? What would you say is the *KEY* for Jesus? Why was

He so effective? And from what He has done, what would you say is the *KEY* for us to be effective like Jesus?

One point we can see from the Life and Words of Jesus here is that we need the Holy Spirit. Jesus was actually lead by the Holy Spirit in everything He did and said. Thus, Jesus reveals to us in these Scriptures that the effectiveness of His Ministry and His Intercession ... the *KEY* for Jesus is ...

***OBEDIENCE TO THE HOLY SPIRIT OF GOD
IN EVERYTHING!***

Now the exciting thing about this is that there is only ONE Holy Spirit. The same Holy Spirit Who Jesus obeyed has been given to us. And I believe that if we do what Jesus did.....Do you remember that *KEY*???

... TO OBEY THE HOLY SPIRIT IN EVERYTHING!!!

I believe that if we really follow Jesus, and obey the Holy Spirit in everything we do and say, especially in intercession, we will experience the same fruit as Jesus did ... the Fruit of the Holy Spirit ... in our prayer and ministry.

+ + +

I cannot tell you enough how important this key is to the Lord. So He gave me a little story to help explain what this means to Him -- to obey the Holy Spirit in everything. The name of the story is “Mother’s Little Helpers.” Those of you who are mothers, and possibly fathers, will understand this story better than anyone else.

“MOTHER’S LITTLE HELPERS”

Those of you who are mothers, I would like you to think of a time when you were preparing dinner. As you were working, all of a

sudden all this “help” showed up ... your little children. And they came to “help mommy cook.” When you finished preparing that meal, you probably ended up with recipes that never existed before and never will again ... because of “Mother’s Little Helpers.” Someone told me that one day, they got the washing soap in the corn bread ... because of “Mother’s Little Helpers”!

Now, remember a time when you were cleaning the dishes. Suddenly, here comes your little 3 year-old child, “Mommy, I want to do it.” Now you love your children and you want them to learn. So you get everything all ready for them to clean the dishes. But you have to admit, a 5-minute job will probably take a whole hour. And you will probably need to clean the whole kitchen later ... because of “Mother’s Little Helpers.”

One day, when I told this story, a man raised his hand, He said, “Sister, I know exactly what you mean. It is like this for me. My work is digging ditches. Well, one day I go to work and dig a ditch, but I do not ask the boss where to dig it!” Now that is the story of “Father’s Little Helpers!”

WELL ***GOD HAS MANY LITTLE HELPERS TOO!***

Now that point is really a heavy idea to think about. “***GOD HAS MANY LITTLE HELPERS!***” But, you know, it IS true! There are all these wonderful, well-meaning people going around doing all these good things for God. But how many of these people ever actually stopped to ask God what He really wants them to do. So, you know what? As a result, it is taking a long time for the Kingdom to come!

+ + +

Now, as I said, this point is a very heavy idea to think about. And I would not say this, if I did not know a secret of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit tells us in Ephesians 5: 16(17), “Do not be thoughtless, but recognize the Will of God.” We can actually know the Will of God. All we have to do is ask Him. The Holy Spirit will

help us.

St. Paul reminds us very clearly about this in Rom. 8:26 and 27. “The Spirit too comes to help us in our weakness. For when we cannot choose words in order to pray properly, the Spirit Himself expresses our prayers in a way that could never be put into words. And God who knows everything in our hearts knows perfectly well what He means. And the prayers of the saints expressed by the Spirit are according to the Mind of God.” St. Paul is telling us here that our common human problem, our common human weakness, is that we do not know how to come to God; we do not know how to pray. And so God has given us the Holy Spirit who knows how to pray according to the Will of God. How many times do we come to the Lord interceding and praying for others, hoping we’re praying for the right thing, hoping that we are praying according to the Will of God, so that He will hear our prayer and have mercy and answer us. I used to add a little phrase on the end of my prayers, “ ... if it be Your Will, God.” I wanted to be sure that I was hoping and praying right, so God would answer my prayers. And yet St. Paul tells us that we should not only be hoping. We should “not be thoughtless, but we should recognize what the Will of God is.” This means, we can really know God’s Will. And the way we can know God’s Will is through the Holy Spirit, Who, Jesus said, “ will lead us into all the Truth.” (John 16: 13.)

In His Whole Life and in His Ministry and in His Intercession, Jesus is before us, trying to teach us something. This is especially important for intercession. Jesus did not leave us any special kind of method or formula as such to use in our lives and in our service of intercession. His whole life was a work of intercession following in obedience to the Holy Spirit. And in John 14:16-18 and 26, Jesus gives us a wonderful promise, “I shall ask the Father and He will give you another Advocate (that Name means Comforter, Counselor, Helper, Intercessor, Strengthener, Stand-by.) He will send you another Advocate to be with you forever ... that Spirit of Truth whom the world can never receive since it neither sees nor knows Him. But you know Him because He is with you, He is in you”. In verse 26, He says, “The Advocate, the Holy Spirit whom the Father will send in

my Name, will teach you everything and remind you of all I have said to you.” The Holy Spirit is going to be the One who leads us in everything, bringing us into the fullness of what Jesus want us to be and to know. And the Holy Spirit is the One Who is going to teach us how to pray. (Romans 8: 26-27)

I want to repeat this again: The Lord Jesus did not give us a method or a formula for our lives or for our prayers.

HE GAVE US A PERSON ...

to live within us, to guide us step by step in our lives and in our intercession, to intercede through us according to the Will of the Father ...

THE HOLY SPIRIT OF GOD!

What a precious gift the Lord has given us!

HOW DOES THE HOLY SPIRIT PRAY?

How does the Holy Spirit pray in us? Do you remember when we talked earlier about what is intercession, we said that the intercessors go in-between God and man, that they not only represent God’s People to the Father, but they represent the Father to His People. They are receiving the Blessings of the Father and directing them right down into other people’s lives. It is so beautiful to see that the first thing that the Holy Spirit teaches us is to call God “Father”. The Spirit cries out in us “Abba, Father.” (Romans 8) He brings us into the relationship and the experience of knowing God as our Father. In John 3: 3 and 5, Jesus says, “Unless a man in born from above, he cannot see the Kingdom of God.” (He can even know the Lord.) And “unless a man is born through water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God.” But praise God for the Holy Spirit who opens our eyes to see the Father and then brings us into union with Him and His Kingdom! We truly can become one of His Own. Then, in the work of intercession, we can truly represent the Father to His People just like Jesus does.

The Holy Spirit does something else in us, and we see this happening in the Acts of the Apostles. As the Blessed Mother and the 120 disciples experience the Fire of the Holy Spirit on the first Pentecost, what do they do? They begin to pray in other languages. And what were they saying? What did their words mean? Look at Acts chapter 2: 11. They were *praising and worshipping* God in tongues, in the other languages that the Holy Spirit gave them. The gift of praise and worship was the first gift the Holy Spirit gave them when He came on Pentecost. And this gift came in the form of other languages. Over and over in the Scriptures we find the Holy Spirit giving this gift of praise and worship first whenever He comes. Why?

Praise and worship is the normal first response to the experience of knowing the Father, as the Holy Spirit cries out in us, “Abba, Father.” (Romans 8:15) Praise and worship is the highest form of love. This Love is a completely unselfish kind of love by which we love God just for Who He is.

Praise and worship in the Holy Spirit is also very important in intercession ... for many reasons. First, in the Scriptures, Jesus is called, “the praise of all saints.” (Psalm 148:14) When we praise God, we are lifting up Jesus. Then, as Jesus Himself promises us, “If I am lifted up, I will draw all men to Myself.” As I already said, this promise of Jesus is very important for intercession. As we lift up Jesus in our praise and worship in intercession, He will be the One Who will draw all others to Himself. And He has all the answers for every need. Therefore, when the Holy Spirit is praising and worshipping the Lord through us, and as we follow His lead in this kind of praise intercession prayer, a lot of spiritual work is going to get done. We may not even have to mention the names of all of the people we are praying for, if we are lifting up Jesus in their lives. He’ll take care of them and many others very directly.

Praise and worship is also very important in intercession for another reason. As we are praying and worshipping the Lord, we can enter deeply into union with God, who draws us into union with Himself. Then, we can give all the Glory to Him from whom all good things come. This is so important for us to do in intercession: that we

do not to hold on to what God has given us, but we give all back unto Him; that we give Him the Glory that is His Due. And as we surrender completely to Him and give Him all the Glory in praise and worship, as we learn how to enter into union with Him in worship ... in that spiritual condition of being totally “emptied out - ready to receive” whatever He wants to give, He will be able to do more in us and through us for others.

Something else that the Holy Spirit does in us to help us know how to pray is that He gives us many gifts, especially the “charismatic gifts”. (1 Corinthians 12: 8-10) The charismatic gifts are tools to use in the work of intercession as in every ministry where we serve God’s people. We already talked about the difference that there is between spiritual gifts and spiritual ministries. That anybody serving in any ministry of the Holy Spirit needs all the gifts of the Holy Spirit to be able to do God’s Work in God’s Way. As we become open to the all the gifts of the Holy Spirit, we experience the Lord giving us words of wisdom, words of knowledge, and prophecy, and all His other “manifold” gifts. And then we start to realize that God really can tell us what to hope for, who to pray for, how to pray for them, exactly point by point, and even how long to pray for others. As we try to follow the Holy Spirit and use His gifts in intercession, He really can lead us in our intercession prayer.

I want to mention here that especially the charismatic gifts are usually best exercised within the Body of Christ, although God does share His gifts with us in our personal prayer too. In this community context, God can confirm to one another what’s happening. He also works in an important way through community to give us a clearer understanding of His Divine Revelation for each situation and to provide a spiritual support, discernment, and protection to one another as we use His gifts. No one of us has the complete understanding of the Lord and His Revelations to us through the gifts of the Holy Spirit. But, as the Lord promised us: “If two or three of you come together in My Name, I will be with you. And if two or three of you agree on anything in My Name, I will do it.” So if all of us are tuned-in to the Holy Spirit and are in agreement with the Holy Spirit and with the Lord Jesus on what He desires and what He wants

to do, think of how effective our prayers are going to be. It won't be a hit and miss kind of intercession, hoping we are praying for the right thing. We will know that we know what God wants to do, and how He wants to do it. And we will be working with Him to enable His Holy Will to come to pass.

So the Holy Spirit not only gives us charismatic gifts, but He also gives us the very special of gift of the Christian Community, the Church, the Body of Christ, within which we can exercise these charismatic gifts.

Ephesians 6 speaks about how we are all involved in a spiritual warfare. Because of this, we all need to have the Armor of God in order to stand. The first part of the Armor the Holy Spirit speaks about in Ephesians is the nature and character of the Lord Jesus Christ, Who is our Truth and Righteousness, our Salvation and our Peace. It is the work of the Holy Spirit, as we see in 2 Corinthians 4: 18, to clothe us in that Armor, to cover us with the Blood of Jesus, because the Lord Jesus is our only protection and strength against the enemy. The Holy Spirit is the One to clean and purify us, so that we will be "like Him in whom we have believed".

Then St. Paul says in Ephesians 6: 17 and 18, "Receive the Word of God from the Holy Spirit to use as a sword ... pray all the time asking for what you need praying in the Spirit on every possible occasion." Not only does the Holy Spirit transform and cover us to protect us in the spiritual warfare, but He also gives us two powerful offensive weapons:

- 1) The Word of God and***
- 2) Prayer in the Spirit to use in spiritual warfare.***

For us, that Word of God may come to us in prayer as one of the charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit that we find in 1 Corinthians 12 to 14. Or the Lord may give us some verse from the written Word of God, the Holy Scriptures, as He did with Jesus during His temptations in the wilderness. Do you remember in Luke 4, when Jesus was tempted by Satan, Jesus spoke the written Word of God, which the Holy Spirit gave Him (John 12: 4 9-50) to defeat the

enemy. The effectiveness of proclaiming the Word God gives us is that we have received it “from the Holy Spirit” NOW, as Jesus did. And when God speaks NOW, He backs up His Word with His Mighty Power NOW and does what He says NOW. Do you hear again the KEY for Jesus in this passage about executing the Word of God in intercession: to “receive the Word of God *from the Holy Spirit* to use as a sword.” Many people simply “claim the Word of God” and tell God what to do by quoting His Word at Him. However, if we follow the KEY for Jesus and *OBEY THE HOLY SPIRIT*, I believe we will see more fruit from the Word of God.

And what is the Prayer in the Spirit? This can take many forms, but is this not especially the gift of tongues; the same prayer language of the Holy Spirit that we already spoke about before when we spoke about the gift of praise and worship that was given at Pentecost. Here St. Paul says that the Prayer in the Spirit is more than a gift a praise of worship the God; it is a special gift of intercession that we can use to lift up the needs of others to the Father on every possible occasion. Not only does the Holy Spirit Himself form us to be true intercessors by bringing us into a living union with Jesus, our Great High Priest and Intercessor, but He also equips us to work in a deep partnership with the Lord Jesus in the spiritual warfare that we are in.

PRAISE THE LORD!

There are so many more things we can learn about how God the Holy Spirit may pray through us in intercession. I would like to recommend some other Scripture studies we have done to help understand a little of the Holy Spirit’s Manifold Ways: “Praise and Worship in Intercession” and “The Holy Spirit, the Intercessor, Who Dwells Within Us.” These are available as part of the ‘Intercession in the Spirit of Jesus’ series.

God can work in so many wonderful ways! But ...

How do we know what to do each time we pray?

I think the Blessed Mother has given us a very good direction on this

point. Do you remember what she said at the Wedding of Cana? “Go to Jesus and do whatever He tells you!” Do you hear again the “*KEY* of Jesus” in these words? Even if you forget everything I say, I hope you will remember this one *KEY*:

“OBEY THE HOLY SPIRIT IN EVERYTHING.”

If we obey the Holy Spirit as Jesus did, I believe we will see Holy Spirit Answers and Holy Spirit Fruit in our prayers and in our ministry, just as Jesus did. Glory to God!

VI. WHAT CAN WE EXPECT IN INTERCESSION?

What we can expect as we intercede for others?

There are many testimonies and experiences that we could probably share, many things that God has done as we have prayed for people and God has answered our prayers. These blessings can help to build up our faith in what we can expect from God as we pray for others.

But there's something I would like us to remember as we ask this question: what can we expect in intercession? We are not just representing the needs of God's People to God, but we are channels of God's Grace and Mercy to His People. We are representing God. And so, what can we expect? Well, our expectations should be as big as God! Do you remember what the Lord said to Abraham in Genesis? "Is anything too wonderful to Yahweh?" And when the angel came to Mary, what did he say to her? "With God all things are possible!" That is the God we are representing in the work of intercession.

After one of his prayers of intercession in Ephesians 3, St. Paul says this: "Glory be to Him whose power working in us can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine." That is the God we serve and our expectations need to be according to Who He Is when we come to Him in intercession. We need to come to the Lord and say: "Lord, I am not going to limit you."

When we intercede, we may ask for one thing. But God may see many other things related to our one request, or many other things He would like to do in the situation we are praying for. And He might work in 25 different ways with our one prayer, while we are just hoping for that one little intention we asked for. So we need to have an attitude of openness within us, a readiness to receive **EVERYTHING** that God wants us to give others through our intercession prayer.

I would like to end this study by sharing some experiences that

have happened to God's People because of intercession. I hope this will give you some ideas about how God does things that are beyond what we ask for sometimes or can even imagine.

I know a sister in the Lord, who was working with the Jesus' People in the western United States of America during the early 1970's. I don't know if you remember them or not, but the Jesus' People looked like hippies, except that they were cleaned up and their hearts were turned over to the Lord Jesus. These young people were part of the Jesus' People Army. They lived and worked full-time for the Lord Jesus. They would spend half of their day in prayer and the Scriptures, and the other half of the day, they were out in the streets preaching the Gospel to the young people.

One time this sister in the Lord was going with some of the Jesus' People on an evangelistic outreach, out into the northwestern United States and up into Vancouver, Canada. She was in the car with the girls; and the guys had gone on ahead to Vancouver. They all had to cross the Canadian border. On this particular day, as she was driving along with the girls, suddenly she could not see the road anymore. She could not drive, and she had this strong desire to pray. So, she pulled off the road and all in the car started to pray. They were praying in tongues, just praying in the Spirit for a long time. After a while this anointing, this call to intercession lifted. As they all felt peace, the girls continued on their way. When they got to the border, they found that the boys had just crossed the border even though they had left a day ahead of the girls. As they talked with the boys, the boys told how they had been harassed for looking like hippies, and so they had only been allowed to cross the border at such and such a time. This sister in the Lord realized that the boys had crossed the border at exactly the time the Lord had stopped the girls to intercede. And all of them just knew that the intercession prayer in tongues had opened the door for their brothers to get across the border. To do God's Work. ALLELUIA!!

Another situation: There was a man in Louisiana, USA, who was awakened in the middle of the night, and he had the strong desire to intercede. He was praying in tongues for a couple hours or so in

heavy, heavy intercession. Some time later, he received a letter from his brother who had been in Vietnam in the service. The letter came from a hospital in the Philippines. When he opened the letter and read it, the letter told how on such and such a night, his brother's battalion had been on a maneuver. The enemy had ambushed them, and the whole company was wiped out. He was seriously wounded, the only one that survived. Others had found him a couple of days later and carried him out of the jungle and took him to the hospital. The Lord had preserved his life. As this man was reading the letter, he noticed the date. Suddenly, the Holy Spirit reminded him: that date was the same night the Lord had awakened him to pray. And it was his intercession that had saved his brother's life! Glory to God!

In the summer of 1983, at the Prayer Group Leader's Conference in Steubenville, Ohio, USA, Father John Randall shared with us his experience. He had been asked before the conference to be one of the people that would speak about what things the Lord had said during the conference, and to respond to the different talks that were given. So he asked his intercessors to pray before he left home, to intercede and see whatever the Lord would show them. When Father John got to the conference, he started to read the prophecies and the Scriptures that the Lord had given his intercessors before the conference. I don't know if any of you were at that conference, but some of the Scriptures that the Lord gave the intercessors were the exact Scriptures that were spoken on at the conference. Some of the prophecies the intercessors received were almost verbatim with the prophecies the Lord gave at the conference. ALLELUIA!!!

It really is amazing how the Lord often shows His intercessors things before they happen, just like He did with His servants the prophets. (Amos 3:7) They really are the watchmen on the tower, that can see Lord coming from afar ... that can prophetically speak the Word of the Lord to His People through intercession preparing them to receive all God wants to give. Glory to God!

As we go through the Old Testament, we can find many things that people prayed for and the way God answered. For example, one time Joshua was fighting the Amorites. It was getting close to

sundown and they couldn't fight after dark. So, Joshua went before the Lord and interceded. (Joshua 10: 12) And do you know that the Lord stopped the sun for 23 hours, so that Joshua and Israel could defeat their enemies! ALLELUIA!

All these experiences say to us that when we come before the Father, we can pray for all kinds of things. We don't even have to know what we're praying for as we intercede in Spirit. And what can we expect? I like to remember the words the Lord said to us one day in an intercessory prayer meeting. He said: "Why do you limit me with your prayers? Your prayers should be as the God you are asking." How big is our God? Then what can we expect?

I also believe, that as we seriously begin to intercede for others, we will experience very soon our own poverty. We really do not know how to pray for ourselves, let alone pray for others. But we have the awesome privilege that we can be in a partnership with Jesus, our Great High Priest and Intercessor before the Father. We share in this awesome privilege because of the Holy Spirit, The Intercessor, the One Who knows how to pray, has been given to us to dwell within us. And He brings us into union with the Lord and forms us as intercessors. As we obey Him, the Holy Spirit can lead us to be effective prayer warriors because He knows how to pray according to the Will of God. (Romans 8: 26-27) Come, Holy Spirit!

CONCLUDING PRAYER

In conclusion, let us pray and continue to pray St. Paul's prayer:

***“Glory be to Him whose Power is working in us,
can do infinitely more***

than we can ask for or imagine.

Glory be to Him from generation to generation

in the Church and in Christ Jesus,

forever and ever. Amen. “ (Ephesians 3: 20-21)

APPENDIX A:

SCRIPTURE OUTLINE FOR THIS STUDY

APPENDIX A: **SCRIPTURE OUTLINE FOR THIS STUDY**

WHAT IS INTERCESSION?

I. Introduction: “WHAT IS INTERCESSION?”

II. Throughout Scriptures, God calls intercessors. He really wants intercessors.

A. God calls intercessors.

Ez. 22: 30

Ez. 33: 2; 3:17

Job 9: 33-34; 17:13

Job 19: 25-27

Is. 21: 6; 64: 7

Is. 59: 16; 63: 5

B. Individuals have responded to God’s call for Intercessors.

1. Ezekiel

2. Moses (Ps. 106: 23)

3. Aaron (Num 17: 6-15) (Wis. 18: 20 - 25)

4. Samuel (1 Sam. 7: 5-10)

5. JESUS, OUR, GREAT HIGH PRIEST and INTERCESSOR

*He perfectly answered call ... and continues to answer it ... for 2000 years.

***Is. 53: 10-12; Heb. 9: 24; Rom. 8: 34; Heb. 7: 25

C. God calls us to intercede.

1. Col. 1: 24 -- Partnership with Jesus, stand in Victory of Jesus for one another

2. Jn. 15: 12; 1Cor 12: 26; Gal. 6: 2 (vine and branches) (Heb. 2: 8-9).

E.g.: magnifying glass (One with God; call to repentance) fasting (power of glass).

3. Intercession is so important to the Lord.

Rev. 8: 3-4 ; Tobit. 12: 12+ -- St. Raphael.

III. What does God want us to intercede or pray for? Breaches?

A. Breach caused by sin. (Life - God's Kingdom, God's Will, God's Plan. (N.B. 1st. Temptation of Jesus)

<u>Breach</u>	<u>Jesus</u>	<u>Us</u>
Is. 59: 2;	2Cor. 5: 21; Jn. 1: 12	1 Jn. 5: 16
Is. 30: 13-14	Is. 53: 2-12 (vs. 5,6,10)	Acts 7: 60 (pray for our enemies) Acts 9 (Saul's conversion)
Eph. 2: 1-3	Eph. 2: 4-6, 13-16	Gal. 4: 19

B. Breach caused by left over effects of sin --> wholeness of person (Mind and Heart of Jesus) God's Will, God's Way. (N.B. 2nd. Temptation of Jesus)

<u>Breach</u>	<u>Jesus</u>	<u>Us</u>
Is. 40: 4	Lk. 22: 31-32 (Peter)	Jn. 11: 44; Mt. 18: 18; 26: 41; (need of inner healing) Mk. 13: 33; 14: 36; Lk.21: 36; Lk. 22: 40,46; Eph. 6: 18; Col.1: 9-12; 4: 12; 2 Thess.1: 11-12 James 5:16 (spiritual & physical healing, inner healing, praying over someone.)
Mal. 3: 3 (H.S. refiner's fire)		

C. Breach between where we are now --> completion of God's Full Plan and God's Glory revealed (in individuals, churches, groups, communities, families, nations.) (N.B. 3rd Temptation of Jesus)

<u>Breach</u>	<u>Jesus</u>	<u>Us</u>
Rom. 8: 18-25	Rom. 8: 34	Is. 62: 6-7 Neh. 4: 10-17 – rebuild Jerusalem
1 Cor. 15: 24-28		2 Cor.13: 19 (see Saint Paul's prayers)
Eph. 1: 7-10 (All one in Christ)	Jn. 17: 21	Acts 1(Praying for Pentecost) 2 Pet. 3: 12 (Hasten the Lord's coming) 2 Chron. 7: 14.

D. Other intentions: 2 Chron. 7: 14 (government)
Missionaries (2x2)

Neh. 4: 10-17 (parable of intercession and ministry).

IV. God calls people to different levels of intercession which depend on the kind or degree of commitment the intercessor has with the Lord. (These flow out of particular relationship with the Lord).

A. All Christians called to pray for one another – a sign of maturity (Flows out of a legal union with Jesus Christ in which we can act on behalf of Him. We share His Life and thus we share His *Now* Divine Work of intercession.)

1. 1 Tim. 2: 1-4, 8 (Mass); Lk. 11 (Our Father); Jn 15: 12; 1 Jn. 3: 16; Gal. 6: 2.

2. God's economy (one can stand for many) (our authority, our responsibility, our effectiveness in prayer covers many people):

Lev. 26: 8; Job 33: 23-26; Dt. 32: 30-31

B. Ministry of intercession. -->Temporary --> special call for a specific purpose or work.

(A special anointing, protection, and authority is given for this work.)

(Flows out of a Life-Union with Jesus Christ. We live with Him so we can know and ask for His Desires.)

1. Teachers for students; those in temporary office:
(e.g. prayer group leaders)

2. Gal. 4: 19; Jn.11; Is. 62: 6-7; Ex. 17: 8-16 (Moses for Joshua)

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1 Corinthians 12: 4-11 -- spiritual gifts / ministries of H.S.
(intercession not specifically mentioned - ministry of helps)

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C. Office of intercessor --> Full-time

(Flows out of a Love-Union with Jesus Christ. One with Him, we, Bride of Christ, can use His Name.)

1. Foundation stone (part of other full time ministries)

- a. Parents for children (St. Monica). Grandparents
 - b. Prophet: Gen. 20: 7 (Abraham).
Ps. 106: 23 (Exodus – Moses)
Ez. 33: 2; Lk. 1: 74 - 75 (protection and up-building).
 - c. Kings in O.T: 2 K.19 – Hezekiah, King of Israel.
2 Chron. 20 – Jehoshaphat, King of Judah.
 - d. Charles Finney (Great revivalist);
K. Kuhlman (healing and miracles)
2. Full-time intercessor.
- a. Priest -Shares in Jesus intercession. Rom. 8: 34; Hebrews.
(2000 yrs. -- Great-High Priest.) Ws. 18: 20-25.
Num. 17: 6 - 15 (Aaron)
 - b. Col. 4: 12 - Epaphras
 - c. Religious (Contemplatives for the Church ...
E.g. St.. Therese = “victim of love”. Patron of missions.)
 - d. Individuals within communities, parishes.
 (“Strength of Church and Prayer groups depends on
strength of intercession going up.”)
 - e. “Conchita”; Rees Howell - The Intercessor.
3. Victim Intercession

D. Summary

- 1. God calls intercessors (Pray/ask God what He desires of you.)
- 2. Commitment: Our “yes” is important
(E.g. Albuquerque- “Pressure cooker”)
- 2. Authority of intercessor: Jn.17 “Let Him give Life”.

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Steubenville Prophecy -1983:

“As the darkness surrounds you a holy time comes.

It will be My pleasure to give you My Glory.

Know that it shall be a mighty wave of My Glory.

I call you to intercede for intercession will cause the wave to begin.”

V. How to intercede?

- A. Rosary, novenas, special prayers of Church, Mass, prayers in Scriptures (Daniel crying out for God's mercy - supplication)
- B. Jesus. In partnership with Him (100% effectiveness.)
 - 1. Is. 61: "The Spirit of the Lord"; Lk. 4: 18-19.
 - 2. Heb. Phil. 2 Jesus like us needed Holy Spirit.
Rom. 8: 26-27.
 - 3. Jn. 14: 16-18, 26 ... Comforter, Counselor, Helper, Advocate, Strengthener, Stand by, Intercessor.
NOT A FORMULA OR A METHOD, BUT A PERSON
THE INTERCESSOR.
 - 4. *KEY OF JESUS (MOTHER'S LITTLE HELPERS)*
- C. How does Holy Spirit pray in us?
(N.B. "Holy Spirit, The Intercessor Who dwells within us")
 - 1. Rom. 8; Jn. 3 ... Reveals the Father - One with Him - therefore, represent Him like Jesus
 - 2. Gifts: Praise and worship, charismatic gifts, Word of God (Eph. 6: 17); community (2 or 3 agree).
 - 3. Instruments of God's Will: Holy Spirit forms and leads us in spiritual warfare (2 Cor. 4: 17).

VI. What can we expect? (As big as our God). We represent God as well as His people.

- A. Channels of God's Mercy: Eph.3: 20; Gen. 18: 14; Lk. 1: 37.
- B. Testimonies: 1970 = Jesus people; Vietnam-Louisiana; Missionary -Michigan and South America; Fr. John Randall -1983; Joshua in Old Testament (Sun stopped for 23 hours.)
- C. Effectiveness: Obedience to the Holy Spirit who unites us to Jesus and prays through us according to the Will of God.

APPENDIX B:

INTERCESSOR'S
PRAYER OF FORGIVENESS

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INTERCESSOR'S PRAYER OF FORGIVENESS
(TO RELEASE OTHERS TO JESUS)

As the Holy Spirit leads, after a time of praise and worship, we pray with Jesus our Lord:

For those who have hurt us, for those who are not doing or have not done what we think they should have done, for those who are not doing what God wants: "Father forgive them, they do not know what they are doing." For those who are in sin: "Father, do not hold their sins against them." And I choose to forgive them and release them in the name of Jesus.

Father, forgive me for anything I said or thought or felt or did to others that could keep them in bondage, especially repeating the negative things even if they were true. I ask for the Mind and the Heart of Jesus Christ. Lord Jesus, help us to see one another as You do. Help us to speak about one another as you do. Holy Spirit, show us how to pray for one another. Amen.

After praying this prayer, we lift the person or persons up to Jesus and place them in His Sacred Heart. Then we sing praising the Lord, calling on the Name of Jesus, and praying in the Holy Spirit until the Holy Spirit brings to our mind how to think and pray for them, or until the burden we feel for them lifts from our hearts and we experience God's Peace and Love toward them. We end with praise and thanksgiving to God for all He has done in our time of intercession.

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Nihil Obstat: Father Pelin D'Souza, Censor

Imprimatur: His Eminence Maurice Michael Cardinal Otunga

Given at is Eminence's Residence

Archdiocese of Nairobi, Kenya, East Africa

25th November 1994, Feast of St. Catherine, Martyr

APPENDIX C:

INTERCESSOR'S MIRACLE PRAYER

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INTERCESSOR'S MIRACLE PRAYER

(TO RENEW OUR COMMITMENT OF LOVE TO JESUS)

*“The Love of God has been poured forth in our hearts
by the Holy Spirit; and this is God’s Gift to us.” (Romans 5:5)*

“Come, Holy Spirit, Come.”

We sing and pray for a time to welcome and invite the Holy Spirit to come and fill us even more with God’s Divine Love and all of His Gifts right now.

As the Holy Spirit is filling our hearts even more with God’s Divine Love right now, we do not want to keep this Love just for ourselves. But we give it back first of all to Our Father in Heaven. Our Almighty Father has loved us with all of His Heart and we see this especially in the Lord Jesus Christ. Let us renew our commitment of love to Our Father in Heaven together. And then renew our love to the Lord Jesus.

Let us pray:

“Dear Father in Heaven, thank you for loving me with all of Your Heart, especially through our Lord Jesus Christ. I love you with all of my heart too. And I also love you in reparation for all those who do not love you today. “

We sing and pray a while, loving Our Father in Heaven ourselves. Then, as we love Our Father for others, especially in reparation for those who do not love God, we lift them up in our hands to the Father. “Abba Father, how I love you.”

Now we want to renew our commitment of love to Jesus together.

Let us pray:

“Lord Jesus, thank you for loving me with all of Your Heart and all of Your Life. Thank you for even shedding Your Precious Blood and dying on the cross for me. Thank you for forgiving all of my sins through your Holy Cross.

“Lord Jesus, come more deeply into my heart right now. Fill me more with your Divine Love, with Your Divine Life. Please forgive me all my sins. I ask you to forgive me especially for all the times I was “God’s little helper”. Forgive me when I did not come to You first and ask You first what You wanted me to do, even when I pray. I DO want to follow You, Lord Jesus. Heal me, Lord. Fill me more with your Holy Spirit and Your Divine Love. Live out Your Life in Me.

“Come, Holy Spirit. Fill me more with Your Divine Love. Make Jesus the Lord of my whole life. I surrender my whole life to You. I give you my way of thinking I give you my way of doing things. I give you my way of praying. I renounce all the ways of the world. I renounce all sin. I renounce Satan and all his evil ways and all his evil spirits.

“I choose You, Lord Jesus. I choose Your Ways. Come, Holy Spirit. Fill me more with Your Divine Love. Make Jesus the Lord of my whole life and the Lord of my prayer. Release in me all of Your Gifts. Help me to love other people as Jesus does. Teach me how to pray. Help me to follow Jesus. Help me to be faithful to Jesus, so I can live in God’s Family forever. Amen.”

We can now take some time to sing and pray a love song to Jesus. As we pray, remember how Jesus came to Thomas after the resurrection. He said, “Look Thomas. Here are the wounds in My Hands and Feet and Side. Put your finger there. Doubt no longer, but only believe. This same Jesus is here with us right now. As we pray, close your eyes and look at Jesus as Thomas did. And maybe somehow you can reach up and put your finger into the wounds of Jesus today. Let His Precious Blood wash through you with all His Love and Mercy and Healing and Miracles. Then let us lift up our people to Jesus. Place them in His Sacred Heart so His precious Blood can wash through them, too, with all His Grace and Miracles.

Let us sing and pray, “Precious Jesus, how I love You.” Amen.