

THE QUESTION OF THE WEEK

“Holy Father I pray not only for them but also for those who will believe in me through their word.”

John 17: 20

Jesus of Nazareth was a person who prayed—a lot. His own disciples saw him in prayer and what they saw had a very positive and profound impact on them so much so that they asked Jesus to teach them how to pray as he himself prayed. First of all, he prayed to God as Father. That was new. Before Jesus God was not called Father by the Jewish people. Lord. God. They were the words used most often. But Jesus portrayed himself as someone who had a profound relationship with God, a truly personal relationship. An intimate relationship with God. A relationship of trust in God. And most fundamental of all a relationship of obedience.

The Letter to the Hebrews says that Jesus “learned obedience from what he suffered.” Obedience means that we listen to the word of another and we open our hearts to that word, we welcome that word, we allow that word to enter into our lives and give us guidance and support and encouragement. That word is accepted and put into practice. That is what obedience means. I submit my heart, my soul and my control to another. I choose to submit myself to the word, to the voice of another. In this case that Other person is Jesus of Nazareth and His Word is the Scriptures.

Jesus prayed not only for his own disciples but also for those thrown into prison or lashed with whips precisely for disobedience, disobeying the order of the religious leaders. If Jesus taught us that we are to ask for our bread on a daily basis can we ever just ignore the need to pray, to turn to Our Lord, to Our Father on a daily basis? That is the question of the week.