

July 28, 2019

From Fr. Jim . . .

A GOOD STORY: A monk who was travelling in the mountains found a precious stone in a stream. The next day he met another traveler who was hungry, and he opened his bag to share his food. The hungry traveler saw the precious stone in the monk's bag, admired it, and asked the monk to give it to him. The monk gave it to him without hesitation.

The traveler left, rejoicing in his good fortune. He knew the jewel was worth enough to give him security for the rest of his life.

But a few days later, he came back searching for the monk. When he found him, he returned the stone and said, "I have been thinking. I know how valuable this stone is, but I give it back to you in the hope that you can give me something much more precious. If you can, give me what you have within you that enabled you to give me the stone."

This story reminds me of all our benefactors and volunteers. You so generously and willingly give of yourselves: time, skills and financial resources. You know the secret of giving the most precious gift of love. Thank you for loving us as you know God loves you. Thank you for sharing your most precious gift: yourself!

ABOUT THE GOSPEL: Prayer was so very important in the life of Jesus. In Saint Luke's Gospel, especially we see Jesus at prayer many, many times. He prayed at his Baptism, before choosing the twelve apostles, after healing people, before feeding the five thousand. Arguably, his whole life was a prayer, lived in close relationship of love with the Father and giving and sharing this love with others. Was a prayer relationship of love what the monk had within him (in the story above) that enabled him to give the traveler the precious stone?

The disciples, those closest to Jesus, witnessed the Lord's life of prayer. You can sense their desire to have what Jesus has in the request, "Lord teach us to pray." Jesus' response is the beloved words of the Our Father and other teachings on prayer. He says they should pray persistently and constantly and trust God to give them what they need.

For me, the Our Father summarizes the love relationship that disciples need in order to be disciples, to love others as God loves, and to do what Jesus does and to have what Jesus has. In our lives of faith, we are always called to pray and to desire to have what Jesus has. Like the disciples in the Gospel, let us trustingly and continuously request of Jesus, "Lord teach us to pray."

