

My Dear Brothers and Sisters,

This weekend we hear about how Christ enters the “true” sanctuary of heaven; He offers to the Father true prayer. His offering stands in stark contrast to the scribes we hear about in the Gospel who go around simply looking for honors, or the crowds putting large sums of money into the Temple treasury to curry favor from God or to look good before others. Christ offers true prayer. This raises the question, how can we pray? Prayer is not work that needs to be done to curry God’s favor, but, rather, relationship with God, intimacy with Him, talking with Him, and just being with Him.

An unknown author is quoted in Fr. Brett A. Brannen’s book *To Save A Thousand Souls*, which describes how to have a conversation with Jesus. I now use this quote at length for this week’s bulletin article.

You do not have to be clever to please me; all you have to do is want to love me. Just speak to me as you would to anyone of whom you are very fond.

Are there any people you want to pray for? Say their names to me, and ask of me as much as you like. I am generous and know all their needs, but I want you to show your love for them and me by trusting me to do what I know is best.

Tell me about the poor, the sick, and the sinners, and if you have lost the friendship or affection of anyone, tell me about that, too.

Is there anything you want for your soul? If you like, you can write out a long list of your needs, and come and read it to me.

Just tell me about your pride, your touchiness, self-centeredness, meanness and laziness. Do not be ashamed; there are many saints in heaven who had the same faults as you; they prayed to me, and, little by little, their faults were corrected.

Do not hesitate to ask me for blessings for the body and mind, for health, money, success. I can give everything, and I always do give everything needed to make souls holier.

What are your needs today? Tell me, for I long to do you good. What are your plans? Tell me about them. Is there anyone you want to please? What do you want to do for them?

And don’t you want to do anything for me? Don’t you want to do a little good to the souls of your friends who perhaps have forgotten me? Tell me about your failures and I will show you the cause of them. What are your worries? Who has caused you pain? Tell me all about it, and add that you will forgive and forget, and I will bless you.

Are you afraid of anything? Have you any tormenting, unreasonable fears? Trust yourself to me. I am here. I see everything. I will not leave you.

Have you no joys to tell me about? Why not share your happiness with me? Tell me what has happened since yesterday to cheer and comfort you. Whatever it was, however big, however small, I’d like to hear about it. It was I who prepared it for you.

Ask me to show you your true vocation. Pray to know my will for your life and pray with confidence and trust. Give me your yes now for whenever I ask the question. I promise that I will answer the question of your vocation for you clearly, when the time is right.

Well, continue on your way. Get on with your work. Try to be a little quieter, humbler, kinder, and more submissive; and come back soon. I am always here, eager and happy to talk to you.