

## **Intercession:**

### ***finding a way through the maze!***

*Praying for others raises a whole set of issues to think about, like....*

#### **Can/does God do things in the world today?**

If God *can't* do things, our whole faith is untrue! The raising of Jesus is the test: if God can raise the dead, He can do anything we ask Him to. *Does God do things today?* - we are unconvinced unless we see for ourselves - and what's so special about *today* that makes our age different from any other?

#### **Does God respond to prayer/will He listen to me?**

Our idea of God may be that He is remote and majestic, but what about Jesus: do we take Him seriously, as 'God come near'? (Some traditional Anglicans don't!) In Jesus, God *heard* our prayer, *saw* our need, and *did* something about it. And will He listen to *you*? YES - each one of us is absolutely loved and valued by God, so yes, He has time for each of us!

#### **How much depends on my personal faith?**

The Bible teaches us to pray in faith, which means believing (*not just hoping*) that our prayer is *already answered*! But *answered* doesn't mean that everything is instantly sorted out, but that God has been alerted to the situation and is involved in it. The ultimate outcome rests on God's decision, not our faith. God is not a slot machine, delivering whatever we want as long as we get the instructions right! Prayer is encountering a MYSTERY!

#### **What can obstruct effective prayer?**

WE can hinder our prayer by wrong belief, unresolved sin and division, and active disbelief in God's revealed truth. SATAN is keen to hinder effective prayer: he can usually get us to do the job for him through the problems already described! He also tries to break up churches and prayer groups, and causes division by undermining leaders. Watch out for him and resist him!

#### **What do we mean when we talk about miracles?**

We use the term 'miracle' for anything

unexplained by the 'rules' of science, meaning that what one generation described as a miracle we now call routine science. But we, not God, invented these 'rules' of science, and God isn't bound to follow them!

God invites us to see his handiwork in every corner of life, so everything is a wonder for which we should praise God, whether we can explain it or not! We are amazed at 'special miracles', but should still give thanks for 'routine miracles'.

#### **How do we know what is the Will of God?**

God reveals His **General Will** (*general = for everybody*) through the experience of the community of faith, recorded in the Bible and in the authentic tradition of the whole Church. He reveals His **Particular Will** (*for individuals and situations*) within His General Will (not outside it). God doesn't contradict His own principles!

Two ways to put the Lord God to the test (*not recommended!*)

A. Demand that God personally confirms to us as individuals what He has already made clear to all in His general Will;

B. Insist that He should make ours a special case, to which the usual rules should not apply!

#### **Why do we have to persist in prayer?**

Few answers to prayer are instant! If you are trying to move a mountain of need, you need to work quite hard before you see any movement! (*The first bit of movement in a situation may be too tiny for us to notice?*) Build up your spiritual muscles by practising on some molehills first. Sometimes God may not respond instantly, to see whether we really care, or are just 'saying a prayer'.

*Prayer is an act of collaboration with God*

**+++++ without God, we cannot:  
without us, God will not! +++++**

*(St Augustine of Hippo)*

*Further reading: 'And God changed His Mind because His people prayed' - Brother Andrew. (Hodder & Stoughton, 1990)*