

**“And I tell you, ask and you will receive; ...”**

*In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

**Once upon a time**, a fellow by the name of Jim Johnson was given the job of saving a failing hotel. Other managers had tried, but unsuccessfully. The hotel was, now, in a ‘do or die’ situation. Jim decided to try something different.

After doing all he thought he could to save the hotel, he drove to the top of a hill overlooking the hotel and the city. He parked the car and sat there for the next 20 minutes –praying!

Jim prayed for the hotel guests, relaxing behind the lighted windows. He prayed for the hotel employees and for their families. He prayed for the people who did business with the hotel. Finally, he prayed for the city and its people.

Night after night, Jim drove to the top of that hill. And, night after night, he parked his car and prayed the same prayer.

Amazingly, before long, the situation at the hotel started to improve. A new confidence radiated from the employees. A new and genuine warmth welcomed and greeted each new guest. A new ‘spirit’ permeated its operation. The hotel experienced a remarkable rebirth.

Norman Vincent Peale, who first told this story, credits the hotel’s rebirth, ultimately, to the nightly prayer of Jim Johnson. He ends his story with this fascinating thought:

***If the prayer of one man could transform a hotel,  
think how the prayer of one nation could transform the world!***

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That **true** story... captures the spirit of today’s readings and the Gospel, which I/deacon just read to you from the Gospel of St. Luke. Talking about prayer, you might inquire:

**“Does asking God for things or asking him to do things, imply that we persuade God to change his mind about doing certain things that he, otherwise, might not have done?”**

**Well, I am glad you asked that question!**

The answer to this question is, obviously, **NO!**

God doesn’t need human wisdom to guide him.

God doesn’t need human persuasion to get him to do what is good and right.

Then, why do we pray to him?

Blaise Pascal, the famous 17<sup>th</sup>-century French mathematician, answered that question this way:

**“Prayer is one of the ways that God chose to share his infinite power with us.”**

To explain: Just as God’s gift of intelligence gives each one of us power,  
...so his gift of prayer gives each one of us power.

In other words, God set up the universe in such a way that we can influence it (for better or worse) not only by the exercise of human intelligence, but also by the exercise of human prayer.

Now, not every person can influence human affairs by the power of his or her intelligence. **BUT**, every person –even one with a relatively low I.Q. –**CAN** influence human affairs by the power of prayer that God shares with us. God made us more than spectators to his creative power. He’s given us a share in it. This is part of what it means to be made to the ‘image & likeness’ of God! You see, there’s a bit of stardust, a smidgeon of divinity in each one of us. It’s called...the **SOUL!**

*Alex Carrel, the Nobel prize-winning surgeon, summed up the power & role of prayer this way:*

***“Prayer is a mature activity, indispensable to the fullest development of the human personality. Only in prayer, do we achieve that complete and harmonious assembly of body, mind, and spirit ...which gives the frail human reed ...unshakeable ...strength.”***

*I now close with this prayer:*

***“Voice of Jesus, call us when we stray.  
Eyes of Jesus, look upon us when we need encouragement.  
Face of Jesus, smile upon us when we need assurance.  
Hands of Jesus, anoint us when we grow weary.  
Arms of Jesus, lift us up when we stumble.  
Blood of Jesus, wash us clean when we get soiled.  
Body of Jesus, feed us when we grow hungry.  
Heart of Jesus, help us love one another... –as you have loved us!”***

*May Almighty God, our Abba, bless you, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.*