



Twenty-Seventh Sunday of Ordinary Time October 8, 2017 A

- **Prayer for healing the family tree**
- **The Lord of the vineyard expects us to bear good fruit.**
- **Baby Love: forget the stages; be present to parenting.**

Prayers for healing the family tree

[Many families are cursed with the sins and wounds of their ancestors, e.g., alcoholism, suicide, various physical and mental diseases, hence, our need to pray for the healing of our Family Tree. Many individuals have, through prayer, been able to break the curse and heal wounds inflicted on their family.]

Heavenly Father, I come before you as your child, in great need of your help.

Many of my problems have been caused by my own failure, neglect and sinfulness, for which I humbly beg your forgiveness.

I also ask you to forgive the sins of my ancestors whose failures have left their effects on me in the form of unwanted tendencies, behavior patterns and defects in body, mind and spirit.

Heal me, Lord, of all these disorders.

With your help I forgive all who have hurt me, especially living or dead members of my family tree, who have directly offended me or my loved ones in any way, or those whose sins have resulted in our present sufferings and disorders.

In the name of your Divine Son, Jesus, and in the power of his Holy Spirit, I ask you, Father, to deliver me and my entire family tree from the influence of the evil one.

Free all living and dead members of my family tree, including those in adoptive relationships, and those in extended family relationships, from every contaminating form of bondage.

By your loving concern for us, Heavenly Father, and by the shed blood of your precious son, Jesus, I beg you to extend your blessing to me and to all my living and deceased relatives.

Heal every negative effect transmitted through all past generations, and prevent such negative effects in future generations of my family tree.

I symbolically place the cross of Jesus over the head of each person in my family tree, and between each generation.

I ask you to let the cleansing blood of Jesus purify the bloodlines in my family lineage.

Set your protective angels to encamp around us, and permit Archangel Raphael, the patron of healing, to administer your divine healing power

to all of us, even in areas of genetic disability.

Give special power to our family members' guardian angels to heal, protect, guide and encourage each of us in all our needs.

Let your healing power be released at this very moment, and let it continue as long as your sovereignty permits.

In our family tree, Lord, replace all bondage with a holy bonding in family love, and let there be an ever-deeper bonding with you,

Lord, by the Holy Spirit, to your son, Jesus.

Let the family of the Holy Trinity pervade our family with its tender, warm, loving presence, so that our family may recognize and manifest that love in all our relationships.

All of our unknown needs we include with this petition that we pray in Jesus' precious Name. Amen.

- Rev. John H. Hampsch, CMF

Reflection on today's Gospel

Commenting on today's Gospel, Fr. Flor McCarthy writes:

"The stone which the builders rejected has become the cornerstone, this was the Lord's doing, and it is a marvel in our eyes."

South Africa is a country blessed by God in a great many ways. It is a large country, has a good climate, and is rich in agricultural land and minerals, especially gold and diamonds. But the country which should have been a haven for all the peoples of Southern Africa became instead a haven for a privileged white minority.

Many people tried in vain to change South Africa's iniquitous apartheid system. Finally, **Nelson Mandela** appeared on the scene. He too tried to bring about reforms. But like reformers before him, he was rejected. Worse, he was hounded by the government, and ended up spending twenty-seven years in prison. However, he not only survived prison, but came out of it with the respect of his enemies and of the entire world.

Furthermore, he came out without bitterness. In fact, he came out smiling, and immediately sought reconciliation with the leaders of the regime that kept him in prison all those years. But even greater things were to follow. The man once rejected was to become the President of a new multi-racial South Africa. The stone which the builders rejected became the cornerstone of a new and better building.

Mandela's is a marvelous story, one of the great stories of the century. What makes it so great is the fact that in it, good finally triumphs over evil. Make no mistake about it, what was done to Mandela (and to others before him) was evil. He did not deserve to be treated like that. His only crime was to seek justice for his brothers and sisters. But in the end, good came out of this evil. A new, free society emerged. Mandela's story helps us to understanding Jesus' story of the vine-dressers.

God had bestowed on his people the sort of love and care which a dedicated vine dresser bestows on a vineyard. But the vineyard failed to produce the fruits of right living. God sent messenger after messenger in the person of the prophets. But far from listening to them, the people abused some of them and killed others. Finally, he sent the Son and Heir—Jesus. But the tenants killed him in the hope of taking over the vineyard themselves.

What the tenants did was ugly and sinful. Yet God did not abandon or destroy the vineyard. He handed it over to others, who would produce the fruits. Thus a new building came into being—the new people of God. Jesus, the one they rejected and killed, is the cornerstone of this new building (the Church).

God never retaliated, never returned evil for evil. He was not vindictive in taking the vineyard from the Jews and giving it to the Gentiles. The tenants brought it on themselves. God never gave up on his people. Just as the rain ensures that the earth becomes fruitful, so God persists until he gets a response.

The parable shows us that there is only one way to overcome evil, and that is with good. What happens in the story is both nasty and ugly. However, while there is much evil in the story, evil does not have the last say. In the end, good triumphs.

Not once can say that Jesus didn't live in the real world. He did. He experienced its ugliness himself. But he didn't answer it with more ugliness. He triumphed over evil by good. He has become a model for all those who suffer unjustly in the cause of right. And he challenges us, his followers, the tenants of the new vineyard (the Church), to produce the fruits of justice, love and peace. It's a great privilege and a great challenge too.

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Baby Love: Forget the stages; be present to parenting

The following article by Annemarie Scobey appeared in the October 2017 edition of *U.S. Catholic*.

Stephanie, who has four children in elementary school, says that some parts of her children's babyhood are blurry. "When I was in the thick of it, I sometimes got overwhelmed, comparing my kids to other kids their age," she says. "Is Lily holding up her head? Why isn't Jimmy rolling over yet? When will Rozzie start crawling? When will Charlie walk?" As her children grow, Stephanie has become more relaxed about their pace for meeting milestones as well as more aware of how fleeting the early years are. "By trying to keep up with the milestones, I might miss the cuddles, the extra smiles, the sleeping noises," she says. "One day standing in church, I realized I was unintentionally swaying. I had been holding an infant for so many years it was just second nature, and as I recognized that I no longer had a baby who needed swaying, I was just a little sad."

Every stage of parenting has both stress and beauty, but it is often not until we are several years beyond a stage that we can appreciate that neither will last forever. And ironically, what we believe is difficult about a particular stage of parenting is often what we later realize is actually a gift. Parents in earlier years of parenting can look to seasoned parents to gain perspective.

Babies: Hold them while you can.

From vibrating bouncy seats to state-of-the-art strollers, the possibilities for devices that tote and hold babies are limitless. They are enough to make a new parent worry just how tricky infants are. What many parents remember most about the baby years is not the gadgets but the soft newness of their babies, the smell of their hair, the closeness that can only come when a child is too young to walk and must be held.

Emma, a mother of one teen and two preteens, looks back on the baby years wistfully. “What stands out is those sleepless nights nursing a newborn. Yes, I was so tired I could cry, but it also felt like we were the only two people in the world,” she says. “I don’t suppose I’d go back if I could, but I wish I could call up that feeling of peace and contentment.”

Toddlers: Make new (parent) friends.

With boundless energy, opinions, and an “I can do it myself” attitude, children between ages 2 and 5 bring both exhilaration and exhaustion to their households. The toddler and preschooler’s drive to run and jump forces parents out of the house and into the neighborhood.

Amy, mother of two college students and one high school junior, looks back fondly at what she calls “the playdate years.” She says it was much easier to make friends herself when her children were young. “I miss meeting with their friends’ moms and hanging out while they play. You have to make an effort even to meet the moms of their high school friends. And very rarely do you hang out.”

Grade school: They’re not as old as you think they are.

Parents with high school and adult children have this to say to their counterparts whose oldest kids are in grade school: “Relax. They are still babies.” Judy, mother of four adults, looks back and feels like she may not have spent as much time with her kids as she could have. “I wish as a young mom I didn’t worry so much about what my house looked like and spent more time just being on the floor with the kids,” she says. “I do that more now as a foster mom and a grandma than I did back then.”

Despite a few regrets, Judy knows she pointed her children in the right direction. “I’m glad I told them I loved them every day as they left the house. I’m glad I gave my girls a blank journal for them to write to me when they were a little anxious to discuss something face to face. I wish I would have made more effort in writing special notes to them,” she says.

Angie, mom of a seventh grader and a high school sophomore, suggests journaling as a tradition for

parents—and says grade school isn’t too late to start. “I started a journal for each child from the moment they were born. I wrote it with the intention of them reading it someday. When they were very young I wrote very often but now, I only write once a year. I would write about who their friends were and how they spent most of their time. I especially loved to write about how they interacted as siblings, the good and bad.”

Recently, Angie’s daughter Charlotte asked to read her journal, and as she laughed through some of the memories, she thanked Angie for writing them down. “It is exactly how I envisioned these being used when I started them,” Angie says.

Marina, mother of two young adults, brings a perspective on grade school sports. “My husband and I used to complain about all the games we had to go to,” she says. “Now that the kids are grown, we have our Saturdays back, but we don’t do a lot. I don’t know what I thought I would be doing with my Saturdays. It was fun to watch them, and I didn’t realize it.”

High school: Watch out, it goes fast.

Parents of high schoolers often seem a bit out of breath talking about how fast their child’s time in high school goes. “I realized, after my first two graduated, that high school was my final opportunity as a parent to have a hand in my child’s faith-based activities,” Elizabeth, mother of three, says. “I made sure my daughter got to go on a service week with our church; it was an eye-opening experience for her that she loved but would not have signed up for on her own.”

Amy, also a parent of three, says that now that all her kids have their driver’s licenses, she better appreciates the time spent driving them when they were younger teens. “I miss sitting in the car with them and conversing. You don’t realize when they get their license that you will miss your time with them in the car because it was such a juggle,” she says. “Then it is gone and you savor any time you get to drive with them.”

The common theme of all stages of parenting is one of presence, of not wishing away the time, of not waiting for the next stage but embracing the current one with grace.

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Have a blessed week,

