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24 Saturday

SATURDAY, Week 7 of YEAR

James 5: 13 - 20

Ps 140: 1 – 3, 8

Mark 10: 13 - 16

“The heartfelt prayer of a good man works very powerfully”, says the Letter of St James. It goes on to give as an example the prayer of the great prophet Elijah. Traditional Christian devotions echo that faith, especially when we call upon certain saints who have a “reputation” for getting answers for prayers... St Jude, St Anthony and countless other favourite patrons. When we ask our fellow-Christians to pray for us we express our faith in the power of prayer, which Jesus taught us about. Let’s not forget that “good” people include all who sincerely try to live in love with God. We acknowledge our sins and weakness, and know that it’s His forgiveness that makes us “good”. Maybe our prayer is more heartfelt in times of trouble or distress or suffering, or when someone close or dear to us needs or asks for our prayers. But we shouldn’t ever think that our own prayers are too weak or useless, or that they won’t be answered. All prayer works powerfully, not because of our efforts, but by the power of the Holy Spirit. We never know the full effect and influence of our prayer, least of all when we doubt or feel that it’s not ‘answered’ in the way we expect. The fact that we pray for each other, and pray together, is a most important sign of our being brothers and sisters in the Body of Christ. It’s He who told us to pray, to ask insistently for what we need, to pray always: and He taught us how, and in His life showed us how He Himself prayed. “Lord, teach us how to pray”

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