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19 ThursdayTHURSDAY, 11<sup>th</sup> WEEK of YEAR

2Corinth. 11: 1-11

Ps 110: 1-4, 7-8

Matt. 6: 7-15

Today's Gospel tells about Jesus teaching His disciples how they should pray. Maybe He gave a longer instruction than the simple few lines in St Matthew's gospel we now know as the "Lord's Prayer" ['Our Father']. It's short, and the words are very familiar to us, perhaps too familiar from frequent repetition. Many books have been written, and sermons preached, about the meaning of each line and word of it, and how it somehow includes all that's needed in Christian prayer. People often say they don't know how to pray, or they want to learn how to pray better or to pray more. But actually, all we need to know and say in prayer is already there in the Lord's Prayer. Before giving His 'sample' of how to pray, Jesus cautioned about "babbling" in prayer --- talking too much, or thinking that we can make ourselves heard by saying much. But our Father in heaven already knows what we need, knows us much better than we do ourselves. The basic attitude we need for prayer is faith and trust in Him. That too is a gift He gives, and we need to ask for and appreciate. These days, there are many "schools" of prayer, practicing and teaching different ways of praying, each focussing on different details. But they all connect with some part of that same "Our Father", giving praise and thanks to God, asking for our needs, asking His mercy and protection. One of the Fathers of the Church said that any prayer that doesn't somehow "fit into" the Lord's Prayer is not a proper Christian prayer at all. Let me today pray the Lord's Prayer more slowly and with deeper attention to the words I'm saying, and with a deeper trust in my Father's love for me and for everyone around me.

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