

LORD, THAT I MAY SEE!

From an old German Legend, By P.Ribes, s.j

Intent of the Legend

- ✓ *Why and how to pray?*
- ✓ *Wrong expectations about prayer.!*
- ✓ *The primary purpose of prayer is that we do the will of God, not that God does ours!*
- ✓ *We are prone to "spiritual blindness". It is harder to get rid of it, than getting rid of "physical blindness"*

The Legend

Tragedy struck the Muller's family. They were aghast at the discovery that Karl, their newly child was blind!

Every Sunday, Karl' mum used to take him to church.

One Sunday, the reading at Mass was the one of Bartimaeus, the blind man. With rapt attention Karl listened to the reading: The Gospel read:

"As Jesus was leaving with his disciples and a large crowd, a blind man named Bartimaeus, was sitting by the road, begging. When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth passing by, he began to shout: `Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!'

Jesus stopped and called him. People told the blind man 'Cheer up, get up, the master is calling you!' The blind man threw off his cloak and ran to Jesus. Jesus asked him: "What do you want me to do for you?" "Teacher;" the blind man answered, "I want to see." "Go" Jesus told him, "Your faith has made you well". And at once the blind man began to see"

When Karl heard this narrative his heart missed a beat He said himself: "Jesus can also work miracle like this, on me. Of course, Jesus can heal me too! Yes! Yes! I know it! He will."

There and then, oblivious of every one in the Church, Karl dropped to his knees and in a shrill quivering voice he cried out his heart to Jesus:

"Jesus, Son of God, have mercy on me! Jeeesus!Jeeesus!... Have pity on me! Open my eyes! I want to see!"

Karl's mum in embarrassment under her breath whispered to him: "Son, Keep quiet! Don't disturb! We are in the Church, the Mass is going on."

But Karl, with sobs every time louder and louder, kept entreating the Lord.

"Jeeesus, have mercy on me! I want to see. Jesus, have pity on me!"

The Parish Priest was forced to interrupt the Mass prayers. . An ominous stillness descended upon the congregation. The air was charged with expectancy, everyone

was holding his breath. Only the piercing entreaties and sobs of the child kept stabbing the thick silence of the Church. Everybody expected a miracle. Of course, Karl's faith was so great!

Yet, nothing happened. No miracle took place. Slowly the child's cries and sobs grew fainter and fainter till finally... the Mass was reassumed. The Mass over, in disappointment people left the church.

Karl too went home sad and dejected. Still his faith was great! Very great! From that lay on, Karl went on praying to Jesus. Yes, he prayed for weeks, for months, for years until he became a young man.....yet he was blind still!

Many days later, on an unfortunate day, everything went to pieces with Karl. His faith broke down. He gave up praying and began cursing God! "What's the use of praying?" he said, "I prayed and prayed for so many years and nothing has happened! Why should I pray any more? They say that God is good and loving. . If so, why was I born blind? Why should I be punished for no fault of mine? No! No! I'll never pray again!"

When Karl's mum heard his blasphemous talk, she was terribly upset. With tears in her eyes she prayed to God: "My God, all these years Karl had such great faith in you. He is gone blind, now, Sweet Savior, I beg of you, open his eyes again, give him back his faith!"

In the village where the Mullers lived, there was a kind and devout man. He too felt very bad seeing the, plight of the blind man. He told to Karl: "Karl, dear, have you ever heard of the miraculous Shrine of Santiago? There, in that town, there is the miraculous tomb of the Apostle James. People flock there. You know, many miracles take place there. If you promise me to pray again, I'll take you there. God can still cure you."

The words of his friend rekindled the dying embers of Karl's faith: He said. "Yes, I promise. I'll pray again, take me there. .A few days later, holding hands, the two friends began the long trek to Santiago. Karl's faith seemed to revive and grow stronger and stronger with every step they took. Finally they arrived at the Shire of Santiago!

Taking Karl by his hand he placed him right in front of the tomb of St James. He said: "Kneel down Karl. Stretch your arms, open your hands touch the tomb stone of St James and with renewed faith pray with 'all your heart and mind to Jesus!"

Karl touched tombstone and from the depths of his heart, in desperation he prayed like this: "Jesus, I want to see! Jesus you know for how man years I prayed to you, yet you did listened to me, Now, you will have to listen to me, otherwise what's the use of my praying to you again!?! Jesus, I am praying to you for the last

time! Jesus. I want to see! Yes! I want to see, by all means, at any cost, come what may! I want it, Jesus."

Finally, Karl broke down crying. Hot tears streamed down his cheeks. After what seemed to him an eternity, Karl arose, brushed his tears, opened his eyelids, and oh! Wonder of wonders! He could see! Yes, he could see. He could not believe his eyes. He could see. He rubbed his eyes time and again...it was true He could see.

God had heard his prayer. Overcome with joy he exclaimed: "O Jesus! Thank you! O God, Thank you! Now, now I really believe in you! Yes, I do believe! I will never stop praying again."

Full of joy, both friends went back to their village. They were in a hurry to reach home and break the good news to their folks. On arrival, Karl lost no time in telling everybody all that had happened. How they walked to Santiago. How he prostrated on the tombstone of St James. How he prayed and just what he had said to Jesus. All who heard him were amazed at what had take place.

To tell the truth, not quite all. The old good parish priest wasn't much happy with what was reported. . He called Karl and asked him: "Son, Is what I hear true? I am told that in your prayer you spoke to Jesus words like these:" Jesus I want to see. I prayed to you for many years, but you did not listen to me! I am praying to you for the last time. I am telling you, Jesus, I want to see by all means, at any cost, come what may?" Is that really this the way you prayed?"

Innocently, Karl replied: "Yes, Father! Exactly, and as you can see, Jesus listened to me and he worked the miracle. I can see now!" The priest shaking his head in disapproval remarked: "Son, frankly, that prayer of yours wasn't a prayer at all! It was rather an insult to God. It was right down insolence on your part to speak to God like that! How can you challenge God? Who are you to tell God what he has to do, to command God to do what you want him to do?"

You also said: I want to see by all means: at any cost; come what may!. Suppose it is at the cost of your eternal salvation? Suppose, that now when your eyes are opened something worse than blindness happens to you? No, no, son, you are wrong, utterly wrong. You should have not done this."

Karl listened with downcast eyes and with a feeling of shame in his heart. Finally, the priest said: "Karl, my boy, if you really want to put things straight with God and make up for your insolence and pray like Jesus taught us to pray.- *"Let your will be done on earth as it is in heaven."* Go back to Santiago and pray again in the way you should have done."

At heart being a nice and a religious minded boy, Karl took the good Priests' advice and asked his friend to take him back to the shrine. They walked again the

same long road. When they reached their journey's end, and entered the church, once again Karl knelt down in front of the tomb. With a quivering heart, with trepidation writ all over his body, closing his eyes and folding his hands, Karl for a second time poured out his soul to Jesus.

He prayed: "Jesus. I want to see. You know everything Lord, I beg of you that I may see, but do not do only what I want, but what you want. Not my will, but yours be done! I ask you, open my eyes but not at the cost of my soul. Into your hands, O God, I commend myself?" After this prayer, Karl was filled with an indescribable tranquility; a great peace pervaded his being. He remained prostrate on the tombstone for a long time

Finally he did open his eyelids. He could not see. He was blind again: In perfect resignation and with a profound peace of soul he said "**Lord, now I see.' Now I see how 'blind I was! Thank you, Lord for giving me back my `sight '!**

Karl and his friend, returned to the village. When Karl entered his home and his mother came to know what had happened, she exclaimed' "**Thank you, Jesus, you listened to my prayer. My son was "blind" and now he can "see"**

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

- Prayer means to communicate with God in a humble and loving way.
- Prayer is not only talking to God, but listening to God.
- Prayer means to wait in silence trusting God
- At prayer, God takes us closer to Him; we cannot bring Him closer to us.
- Prayer should always help us to accept the will of God and to put it into practice.
- The primary purpose of prayer is that we do the will of God, not that God does ours!
- God does not need our praises, thanks-giving and adoration....(*On the contrary it is we, who need to praise, thank and adore God*)`
- The fact that we are able to thank, praise and worship God is already God's grace and gift.
- We have to believe that in the final instance God is a mystery and so we have to bow and submit.
- We are prone to "spiritual blindness". It is harder to get rid of it, than to get rid of physical blindness.
- To heal Karl of his physical blindness God worked one miracle, to heal him from his "spiritual blindness" God worked two miracles!
- Karl's mother was the one who really prayed best of all
- It's better to lose one's eye-sight than to lose one's vision.
- Prayer is much more an offering of self than just asking graces and favors for oneself.
- At prayer we acknowledge our absolute dependence from God.

- Many people lose faith in God and give up prayer because they entertain wrong assumptions about prayer, such as
- That God has to be at our service,
 - That prayer works automatically,
 - That prayer is infallible –*in a true sense it is infallible*
 - That praying to God through the intercession of saints is more efficacious.
 - That the more prayers we say and the longer we pray the better..
 - That Jesus has promised to grant us all we want, that He cannot let us down,
 - That saying prayers (in plural) is more efficacious than prayer (in singular),
That prayers can bend the will of God; namely, they can make God change his mind!