

**October 01, 2017**  
**Let Us Pray ~ A Harvest Sermon Series**  
***The Cry of Our Hearts***

**First Reading ~ Luke 18:9-14**

Jesus spoke this parable addressed to those who believed in their own self-righteousness while holding everyone else in contempt: “Two people went up to the Temple to pray; one was a Pharisee, the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood and prayed like this: ‘I give you thanks, O God, that I’m not like the others—greedy, crooked, adulterous—or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week. I pay tithes on everything I earn.’ But the tax collector, standing at a distance, would not even raise his eyes toward heaven, but he beat on his chest (a sign of sorrow and remorse) and said ‘O God, be merciful to me, a sinner.’”

“Believe me,” Jesus said, “the tax collector went home from the Temple right with God, while the Pharisee didn’t. For those who exalt themselves will be humbled, while those who humble themselves will be exalted.”

**Second Reading ~ adapted from Sister Macrina Wiederkehr in**  
*“A Tree Full of Angels: Seeing the Holy in the Ordinary”*

To pray is to touch God and let God touch us. It is a matter of presence and response. Prayer does nothing to make God more present, for God is always present. Prayer is our response to the presence of God in our lives.

A friend comes to see us. What do we do? We reach out to touch and receive that friend. We allow this friend, in some way, to touch us. Friendship is a marvelous exchange, and that is exactly what prayer is. So how do I pray? I listen. I talk. I weep. I am silent. I embrace the beloved. I gaze with reverence. I wonder and adore. I share my needs. I have tea with God. I give gifts. I receive gifts. I give thanks and I say I’m sorry. I scream. I get angry. I show God all my life, including my very divided heart. I relax. I’m at home. Sometimes I read a poem or tell God a story. Sometimes I dance. God loves stories and poems and dances.

God recognizes the cry of my heart as prayer. I feel the recognition, and though I thought it was God’s recognition, it was really my own.