

***Seventeen Sunday in Ordinary Time***  
***July 28, 2019***

*“The knowledge that we are in need of redemption would merely cast us into despair unless we also knew that it is God’s will to redeem us.”*  
*(Dietrich von Hildebrand, Transformation in Christ, p. 189)*

In our reading from the Book of Genesis, we are able to reflect upon the mediation of Abraham as intercessor for the people of Sodom and Gomorrah. This exchange speaks of the intimate relationship which had developed between God and Abraham. They are able to walk together discussing the fate of the people in Sodom and Gomorrah. It is during this walk that we listen as Abraham appears to pester God; interceding for the lives of the innocent. This moment reinforces our understanding of Abraham’s righteousness. He could have callously said: “Oh well, they made their bed and now they must lie in it” concerning the citizens of Sodom and Gomorrah. Yet, prays unceasingly for a people he does not know.

Whether Abraham understood the concept of or the need for redemption, he knew these people needed help and he was going to do whatever he could to ask for that help. He displayed the same firmness of purpose that a parent should have concerning their own child. Again, it is easier to pray for and intercede on the behalf of someone you know and love. Abraham performed this duty for a people he did not know. Abraham’s example reminds us of our own duty to pray and intercede, not only those we know and love, but also for the many people we will never get to know. We have a responsibility to pray for all men and women; most especially those whose lives have become distant from our heavenly Father.

Yes, in the words of Jesus, we call God a Father. He is not just a Father or my Father, but Our Father. Did Our Father desire the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah? No, He did not want to destroy His children. We must not forget that the people of Sodom and Gomorrah were the children of God in the same way that we too are the children of God. As God sees it, a child who is close to Him, desiring to live a life in union with Him, is loved in every way as a child who denies Him both in word and deed. All men and women, saints and sinners are His beloved children. This is why our choosing to sin hurts Him so deeply. I am told that the pain caused by a child toward their parent hurts much more than the pain inflicted by a stranger. Today, let us imitate Abraham in interceding to Our Father for all of His children. We pray for all to return to Him with their whole hearts. Not solely because we know those for whom we pray. Rather, we know Our Father whose heart is so wounded by their actions. May there also be someone today who will pray for us that we too may return to Our Father with hearts full of love.