

Donnybrook

9 March 2022

Welcome

I guess all of us ask for things in prayer. At the moment, I'm praying for two things. I'm praying for peace in Ukraine and just end to an unjust war and I'm praying for the synodal pathway in the church.

Topic

Such prayer is a mixture of concern, commitment and need..

Steps

Perhaps helplessness is more evident as I pray for peace in Ukraine. Like others, I do feel quite powerless. And yet, there are things I / we can do. We can support the people of Ukraine in a humanitarian way – and our prayer in that case motivates our sense of solidarity. This was exactly the point made last Wednesday week by Fr Vasyl Kornitsky: prayer is an act of solidarity and, ultimately, an expression of love. In that case, prayer of petition is significant: I am moved to support the people of Ukraine and yet at the same time I send to God a helpless cry of pain – what is happening should not be happening. In asking, I open my heart to God.

My other petition, at the moment, is for the synodal pathway, initiated last night in the parish here. I pray for it because I want it to go well. I pray for it and, as an expression of that prayer, I commit myself to the process, whatever it takes. I pray for it that we may listen to what the Spirit is saying, as we listen to each other.

Concern

As noticed the other morning, I'm certainly not informing God and much less persuading God to respond. Instead, I am making myself available, so that whatever God wants may happen through us and through me. Prayer is indeed desire, as Augustine noticed.

But prayer is also a discipline: gradually my agenda, my demanding desire, takes a back seat, so that what God wants is what I want too. Ultimately, the only prayer a Christian can make is a line of the Our Father: may your kingdom come. Everything else is commentary and, in a way, subordinate.