

February 2, 2020

From Fr. Jim . . .



Please consider this: There is a true story about former Prime Minister Menachem Begin's visit during the Carter administration. Seated in the Oval Office of the White House, Prime Minister Begin asked President Carter about the three telephones on the president's desk. President Carter responded: one goes to Plains Georgia, so I can keep track of my brother, Billy; one is a hot line to Moscow, which gives me instant communication with the Russians and one is a direct line to God!" "How much does that cost?" asked Begin. "Ten thousand dollars a month but it is worth every cent," replied the president.

Sometime later, Carter visited Israel and sat with Begin in his office. Seeing three telephones on his desk Carter asked, "Why do you have three phones?" "Well, one is a hot line to Cairo, Egypt, one is my direct line to Parliament, and one is my direct line to God!" Carter asked, "What does your direct line to God cost?" "Ten cents," Begin responded. "It's a local call!"

Would you consider your relationship with God a long distant one or a local one? Is God more of a higher power watching over you from a distance or very near to you, one with you and within your reach and grasp? When we pray, is our praying more like making a long distance call or talking to our neighbor from across the back yard fence?

We can't ever forget that our God is transcendent-always greater than ourselves and more than we can imagine, truly a God of heaven but our God is also incarnate – one with us in our very flesh, a God also of earth. God is as near to us as our very heartbeat and is as real to us as our love for our neighbor and as the Church is the Body of Christ, living its faith into action. Let us call upon the Lord always and often, especially while he is near.

Today's Gospel tells us that Mary and Joseph took Jesus to the temple in Jerusalem to present him to the Lord. Simeon and Anna received Jesus and they both knew immediately that Jesus was the light of the world and salvation for all people. God was as close to them as was the person of Jesus. God remains that close to each one of us as God's spirit dwells within us and lives among us. It is so important for us to present ourselves to the presence of God and the Spirit of God each day. It is so important that we dedicate our lives to God's ways and will each day. It is so important that we want to imitate the actions of Jesus, love others as he loves them, and continue his mission on earth. It is so important that we make a call to God a local call!

Prayer for vocations: (written by Archbishop Schnurr)

Almighty Father, you have created us for some definite purpose. Grant us the grace to know the path you have planned for us in this life and to respond with a generous "Yes." Make our Archdiocese, parishes, homes and hearts fruitful ground for your gift of vocations. May our young people respond to your call with courage and zeal. Stir among our men a desire and the strength to be good and holy priests. Bless us with consecrated religious and those called to a chaste single life, permanent deacons, and faithful husbands and wives, who are a sign of Christ's love for his church. We commend our prayer for vocations to you, Father, through the intercession of Mary our Mother, in the Holy Spirit, through Christ our Lord. Amen.