

June 16
All the Prayers of God's People
Prayer and Play
Psalm 16:8-11

"You show me the path of life. In your presence there is fullness of joy; in your right hand are pleasures forevermore".

For many of us, play is something that comes *after* the "seriousness" of spirituality, religion, or prayer. It is outside of our work, our religious practice, and even our relationships. But play involves the tapping into something deeper within ourselves. When we play, we discover an inner joy and allow ourselves to be vulnerable. To be vulnerable means that we are open to being influenced or even wounded so that growth may happen.

One of the ways this vulnerability shows up is in our prayers. When we pray "from the heart", it does not need to be perfect or precise. In fact, we don't even have to know what we are praying for, it is more the vulnerability to come before God and be discerning and shaped. To play in prayer means that we can laugh with God and be silly with God and know that this same God who promises pleasures will meet and grow us there.

This "playful" perspective has a side effect of making spirituality available for *everybody*. It is universal. Think of how Jesus in Matthew asks the children to "come unto me". He didn't instruct them to stop being children, but he embraced their playfulness and let us know that this purity of heart is how he would like to meet us, as well!

As Christians, part of evangelizing is helping others tap into the divine, whether they name it as God or not. And for us, a deepened understanding of spirituality can deepen our own outward religious

practice. Why must our religious practices or relationships or work be rigid and cold? The answer is that they don't have to be.

Playfulness in prayer is an opportunity to embrace God's creativity and playfulness in the very act of creation. After all, God made us all and that in itself shows some playfulness. Let us practice playfulness in our faith, in our prayers, and in our interactions with each other, being vulnerable to growth in our life journeys with God and with one another. Who knows, we may just have fun along the way! Let us pray...

Now I sit me in a chair. Help me not play with my hair. Give me hands that fold to pray. Don't let me think too much to say. Fill my days with thankfulness. Take my "No" and make it "Yes." Let me play when work is done. And allow me to make prayer fun. In Christ's name, shape me, mold me, make me to be worthy of you. Amen.