

*“Lord, teach us to pray.” 11 Luke 1*

It is fitting that the disciples turned to Christ in their desire to learn how to pray. Something resides in our hearts that longs for a better prayer life. We yearn to be drawn closer to God. When we pray in unity, it draws us closer to each other.

My most recent letter from Eric, my pal on death row, highlights the importance placed on joining with others in prayer. Nothing like time in isolation underscores more powerfully the value of being in community.

What does one on death row pray for?

First, he gave thanks for the Rosary Prayer Card and the Evening Common Petition card. He sets his alarm to go off just before 8 p.m. so he can prepare to join in prayer. He is permitted to have a small wrist rosary.

Next, he described how he encourages (pesters) other inmates to stop and pray when they complain about being bored. Spoiler alert- prison is boring. If they don't know what to pray for, Eric asks them to pray for him. How can it be that one in solitary confinement on death row can be an evangelist?

Then, he prayed for my father-in-law. My father-in-law had a cancerous mole removed. Eric shared that his father-in-law died from a cancer that was neglected for years. He prayed for a swift and smooth recovery for my father-in-law.

He prayed for my son's friend who recently placed his father-in-law in hospice care. He shared that he was the coordinator for his father-in-law's hospice care. Eric knows a thing or two about the appointments, providers, and waiting. He is praying for the grace of a peaceful death. Who better than one on death row to offer a prayer for a peaceful death?

Finally, he asked me to pray for one of the guards. He described her as, “very mean and treats us badly.” He asks, *“How can we expect our enemies to get better if we don't pray for them...”*

Let us join in prayer. Let there be mercy for the broken, healing for the victims, wisdom for judges and lawmakers, prudence for guards, and peace to all.

*Lord, teach us to pray.*