



WEEKLY GOSPEL REFLECTION



17th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Cycle C

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"Thy kingdom come." Luke 11:2

This week's Gospel according to Luke is a short catechism on prayer. He begins with the Lord's Prayer, but it is a version different from Matthew's that likely comes from the early Lukan Community liturgical tradition.

The Lukan form of this prayer has five petitions. The first petition ("*hallowed be*") gives praise to the Father, as expected at the beginning of all prayer. The petition, "*your kingdom come,*" is a reminder for us that we are glory bound and things of this world are transient.

"Give us each day our daily bread" is a reminder that all that we have and all that we offer is from the Father. Bread is a food commonly shared. When we say in the Mass "*fruit of the earth and work of human hands,*" we refer not only to our daily bodily substance but preeminently our spiritual nourishment, the Eucharist, the source and summit of our lives.

The petition for forgiveness, "*forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive everyone in debt to us*" reminds us that Christians are called to forgive, which is only possible through the intercession of Christ and his Sacred Heart flowing with divine mercy.

The final petition, "*do not subject us to the final test*" is the same test reported in the gospel a few weeks ago that James and John, the "*sons of thunder*" failed. They were angered at being rejected by the town they passed through. "*When James and John saw [the rejection of Jesus], they said, 'Lord, do you want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them?' But Jesus turned and rebuked them.*" (Luke 9:54) We must be prepared to encounter those that will reject the offer of the Peace of Christ. In these negative encounters we are "*tested.*" Will we react with violent reprisal? We must remain in union with God and, when confronted with adversity, return only mercy, the seed for the environment that leads to the inbreaking of the Kingdom, a peaceful, nonviolent path leading to hope. This final petition does not suggest the inevitability of "*the test*" but rather hope that violence and destruction not come about.

Next Luke appends two images of prayer. The first stresses the importance of asking for what we need. If the man will grant his friend's request, despite the inconvenience, we then should not hesitate to petition God.

The second image involves a father who gives his son good things. God will even more readily give the Spirit to those who ask. Matthew (7:9) says that God will give "*good things.*" Luke suggests good things come through "*the Holy Spirit.*" The Holy Spirit is the ultimate gift of God that imbues us with everything the Christian needs.

As you reflect on this gospel ask the Holy Spirit to create in you a bond between your Heavenly Father and his earthly children, a bond that will bear fruit as we journey along the Pilgrims Way of the Cross toward the New Jerusalem.

A reading from the holy gospel according to Luke.

Jesus was praying in a certain place,
and after he had finished, one of his disciples said to him,
*"Lord, teach us to pray,
as John taught his disciples."*

He said to them,
*"When you pray, say:
'Father, hallowed be your name.
Your kingdom come.
Give us each day our daily bread.
And forgive us our sins,
for we ourselves forgive everyone in debt to us.
And do not subject us to the final test.'"*

And Jesus said to the disciples,
*"Suppose one of you has a friend,
and you go to him at midnight and say to him,
'Friend, lend me three loaves of bread;
for a friend of mine has arrived,
and I have nothing to set before him.'
And your friend answers from within,
'Do not bother me; the door has already been locked,
and my children are with me in bed;
I cannot get up and give you anything.'*

*"I tell you, even though he will not get up
and give him anything because he is his friend,
at least because of his persistence
he will get up and give him whatever he needs.*

*"So I say to you: Ask, and you will receive;
seek, and you will find;
knock, and the door will be opened for you.
For everyone who asks receives,
and everyone who seeks finds,
and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened."*

*"Is there anyone among you who,
if your child asks for a fish,
will give a snake instead of a fish!
Or if the child asks for an egg, will give a scorpion!
"If you then, who are wicked,
know how to give good gifts to your children,
how much more will the heavenly Father
give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!"*

The Gospel of the Lord