

Handout 1: Matthew Lesson 11

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Invocation and 7 Petitions	Interpretation
<i>Our Father in heaven</i> [Invocation]	We become children of God in our baptism into the family of God when we receive the gift of divine son/daughter-ship extended to us through God's only begotten Son. God is "our" Father because He has gathered us together in one holy, universal family—the Catholic Church. Heaven is the home of our Father and therefore our true home. Sin exiles us from our true home, but repentance and conversion of heart enables us to come home to God our Father through the blood of Jesus in which heaven and earth are reconciled.
<i>Holy be Your Name</i> [petition #1]	We sanctify His holy Name by living holy lives. This petition also includes the plea that God make holy His own Name by manifesting His power and glory in our lives and in the lives of all members of the family of man by establishing the fullness of His Kingdom.
<i>Your Kingdom come</i> [petition #2]	The coming of the Kingdom of God is the realization of God's plan of salvation in the world. The Kingdom establishes itself in the 1 st stage in the core of our being, raising us up to share in God's own inner life which we live by God's grace through the sacraments of our faith in the kingdom of heaven on earth—the Church. The 2 nd stage is the promise of eternal life, where our elevation to the supernatural level is fully completed. For our part we need to respond to God with humility, love, trust, and obedience and service to His Church, the Kingdom of Heaven on earth.
<i>Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven</i> [petition #3]	This petition concerns God's "will" and the fulfillment of His "will." First we must identify humbly and unconditionally with God's will—to abandoned ourselves in the arms of our Father and to His plan for our lives. To pray <i>Your will be done</i> is to first seek the heart of God. The second part of the petition: <i>on earth as it is in heaven</i> , means that just as the angels and saints in heaven are fully at one with God's will, so too, it is our desire that the same union of will should true on earth—for us individually, for our faith communities and for the universal Church as a whole.

<p><i>Give us today our daily bread</i> [petition #4]</p>	<p>From the times of the Fathers of the Church, the rare word <i>epiousios</i> (only here and in Lk 11:3) translated as “daily,” has always been taught to be a reference to the Eucharist. It is the “bread” our heavenly Father provides to nourish us on our spiritual journey to the promised land of Heaven, just as He daily gave manna to the Children of Israel on their physical journey to the Promised Land of Canaan. But our bread from heaven is the very Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity of Jesus our Savior.</p>
<p><i>And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors</i> [petition #5]</p>	<p>The Greek word translated as “debt” has a moral connotation, meaning “the debt of sin” (Lk 11:4). Forgiveness of our fellow man/woman is crucial to our relationship with the Father through the Son. We cannot ask God to forgive us if we withhold our forgiveness of others. At the end of the prayer, Jesus returns to the subject of this petition in 6:14-15 and teaches that unwillingness to forgive means that we have condemned ourselves to God’s Judgment. Jesus warns: <i>If you forgive others their transgressions your heavenly Father will forgive you. But if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your transgressions.</i></p>
<p><i>And do not subject us to the final test</i> [petition #6]</p>	<p>In this petition we recognize that our human efforts alone do not take us very far in trying to cope with temptation and sin. Therefore, we must turn to God to get the strength we need to resist the temptation to sin and, through the work of the Holy Spirit, to successfully fight the battle against sin to live the victory of a holy life. Such a battle and such a victory are only possible if we remain vigilant and obedient and if we are strengthened through prayer and the Sacraments, we need not fear the Final Judgment.</p>
<p><i>But deliver us from the evil one</i> [petition #7]</p>	<p>This petition asks that we be delivered from the devil or Satan who is the author of all the evils to which we are subject in this world and over whom we have been promised victory.</p>

Handout #2: Matthew Lesson 11

Prayer is one of the great mysteries of the faith:

1. Prayer is a gift from God in which humans are invited to communicate with God when they come to Him with humble and contrite hearts.
2. Prayer is an act that demonstrates the privilege of the New Covenant relationship between God and man in Christ.
3. Prayer, offered in the name of Jesus, is a New Covenant communion of life in which the living relationship of God's children is experienced with their Father, with His Son Jesus Christ, and with the Holy Spirit—it is an act of living in the grace of the Kingdom which is “the union of the entire holy and royal Trinity... with the whole human spirit” (St. Gregory of Nazianzus).

The 2nd petition: *Your Kingdom come...*

The Kingdom establishes itself in the core of our being, raising us up to share in God's own inner life. This elevation has 2 stages:

- The 1st is in this life where the kingdom is brought about by grace in living the sacraments of our faith in the Kingdom of heaven established on earth which is the Church (as promised in Dan 7:27).
- The 2nd definitive stage is in eternal life, where our elevation to the supernatural level is fully completed.

For our part we need to respond to God with humility, love, trust, and obedience and service to His Church.

The two desires of the 3rd petition: *Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.*

1. *Your will be done ...* we identify humbly and unconditionally with God's will; we abandoned ourselves in the arms of our Father and to the fulfillment of His plan for our lives. To pray “Your will be done” is to seek the heart of God.
2. *on earth as it is in heaven...* our prayer is that just as the angels and saints in heaven are fully at one with God's will so too it is our desire that the same union of will should true on earth:

- For us individually
- For each faith community
- For the universal Church as a whole

The 4th petition: *Give us this day our daily bread...* the Greek word, which most Bible translators have translated ‘daily’ is *epiousios*. This word is a grammatical anomaly (a *hapax legomenon*, Greek for “said once”). Scholars have proposed 4 different meanings for this word:

1. daily
2. necessary for existence
3. for the following day
4. for the future.

St. Jerome's definition was “super-substantial” or “necessary for existence.”

5th petition: *forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors ... opheilema* = “debts” in Mt and *hamaritas* (sins) and *opheilema* (debts) in Luke 11:4.

This petition refers to:

1. Our continual repentance and conversion as we see forgiveness for our sins on our journey toward salvation.
2. Our plea for God's forgiveness when we face our individual judgments after death (Rom 14:10; 2 Cor 5:10; Heb 9:37)

In the Old as well as in New Testament times, sin was conceived of in terms of a debt, and in the Old and in the New Testament a "debt of sin" can only be paid with blood.

The 6th petition: *And do not subject us to the final test ...*

The "final test" can mean:

1. The final temptation to sin just prior to one's death before one has the opportunity to repent.
2. The final period of tribulation prior to the return of the Messiah.
3. The Final Judgment at the end of the Age.

St. James wrote, *No one experiencing temptation should say, "I am being tempted by God;" for God is not subject to temptation to evil, and he himself tempts no one. Rather, each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire* (Jam 1:13-14). It is God's solemn promise that *He will not let you be tried beyond your strength; but with the trial he will also provide a way out, so that you may be able to bear it* (1 Cor 10:13).

The 7th petition: *But deliver us from the evil one*

Whoever sins belongs to the devil, because the devil has sinned from the beginning.

Indeed, the Son of God was revealed to destroy the works of the devil (1 Jn 3:8). We are delivered by the Sacraments of Reconciliation and the Eucharist.

Fasting and Abstinence: Abstinence on Ash Wednesday and all Fridays of Lent. A fast is required one hour before and approximately 20 minutes after receiving the Sacrament of the Eucharist. The obligation of the Catholic to observe days of fasting and abstinence is the 5th Precept of the Catholic Church: *The fifth precept ('You shall observe the prescribed days of fasting and abstinence.') ensures the times of asceticism and penance which prepare us for the liturgical feasts; they help us acquire mastery over our instincts and freedom of heart* (CCC 2043b). The Church's universal law, which is found in the *Code of Canon Law*, states that all Fridays of the year are days of abstinence unless the local bishops' conference has made other provisions (with the approval of the Holy See). The American Bishops' Conference has ruled that abstinence is required only on Ash Wednesday and the Fridays of Lent. Abstinence on other Fridays of the year is, however, encouraged and this devotion may also be expressed by an act of mercy which replaces the penance of abstinence from meat.

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