

## *Luke 11:1-13*

He 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 indebted to us.  
And do not bring us to the time of trial.”

And He said to them, “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 he 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 it will be given you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you. For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches 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 evil, 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*

**Reflection Questions**  
***Luke 11:1-13 July 29<sup>th</sup>***

- 1) **Context:** This passage finds itself between Jesus' teaching Mary and telling others that she has chosen the better part and Jesus casting out demons. Jesus is preparing His disciples to actively minister to others. The quality and effectiveness of their ministering will be intimately related to their ability to listen to Him and their ability to listen to the Father in prayer. Interesting, the disciples do not ask Jesus to teach them how to preach fancy sermons, how to do flashy healings, how to gather large crowds so that they could be as 'successful' as He was. No, instead, they asked Him, "Teacher, teach us how to pray." (very specifically asking for instructions); Prayer, the foundation of discipleship. The foundation of any ministry. The disciples had witnessed first hand Jesus' own powerful prayer life and the strength that He gained from spending time with His father in prayer and so they ask Him to teach them how to pray (Luke 3:21, 6:12, 9:18, 28; 10:21-22, 22:32,41-42, 23:34,46). This is one of the only times that the disciples ask for explicit instructions on how to do something. The other times are when they ask how to cast out demons (Matt. 17:19-21) and how they will get to where He is (John 14:5).
  
- 2) "Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples." (v.1b). Imbedded in that question is a desire to know a set prayer for recitation as well as instructions in prayer principles. The 'Our Father' has both; we still recite it at every mass, throughout the day and when we pray the rosary or a chaplet. But it is also a template upon which we can reflect as it contains within it the 5 forms of prayer. 1) Adoration, 2) Praise/thanksgiving, 3) Petition, 4) Contrition and 5) Intercession. Adoration is adoring God for who He is, Praise is praising and thanking Him for all He does and gives, Petition, is asking for more, contrition, demonstrating a contrite heart and intercession we pray for ourselves and others. Take a look at the prayer and see where you find these forms within it. It is also a very powerful spiritual exercise to meditate on each of the parts of this prayer very slowly and see what comes up for you. (many of the Saints did this).
  
- 3) In Aramaic, the word for 'Father' that Jesus used in this prayer is 'abba' meaning daddy or papa; a very affectionate term for God a far cry from the Hebrew YHWH (that was composed of only consonants because it was not meant to be spoken). Not only does Jesus ask His disciples to speak God's name out loud, but He is also encouraging them to use a very familiar term

for God, papa, daddy. When have you experienced that close affection for your papa in heaven? Do you experience yourself as His beloved child?

- 4) “Hallowed (or Holy) be Thy name.” That second phrase reminds us that even though God is close and cares about us like a loving affectionate Father, He is still to be revered and adored, since He is still after all the Creator of the Universe. How do we hold these two things; 1) the close affection of God and 2) the Holy Reverence?
- 5) Verses 3 and 4 are outright petitions. Jesus has to teach His disciples that it is ‘Ok’ to ask directly from God for what we need. In fact, not only is it “ok” but it is necessary for us to be direct in our asking in order to fulfill our role in a mature relationship with God. When was the last time you asked for something directly from God? What was the response? Jesus tells them to ask for their ‘daily’ bread. We are to humbly rely upon God to meet our daily needs (not monthly...not yearly...but daily). Do we do that? How has someone with fewer means taught you to do that?
- 6) “Protect us from evil.” Jesus asks them to pray for protection from the evil one, knowing that His disciples will be on satan’s ‘hit’ list. But He also assures them that God will not give them a greater test than they can handle. How has this been true in your own life? How have you grown from the trials that God has allowed?
- 7) To ask for bread from a neighbor is like asking for a cup of sugar from a neighbor today; a simple request for a basic need. Any decent neighbor of that era would have been aware that he/she would be obliged to respond because the community shares the responsibility for providing hospitality to travelers. But the setting is in the middle of the night; Jesus paints this setting to up the ante. The neighbor now has an excuse for not responding. But Jesus makes it clear that the neighbor will respond eventually (not necessarily because of neighborly love) but because of the persistence of the one asking. When have you been called to be persistent in prayer about something? What was the result?
- 8) “Ask, seek, knock” all appear in the present tense which gives the suggestion of continual ‘asking, seeking, knocking’. Again, the theme of persistence appears; do we do this?

- 9) In verses 11-12, Jesus reminds them of the eternal GOODNESS of the Father and that we should not question His goodness. When do we do this? What is the result?
- 10) In some ways it seems that Jesus is presenting two contradictory themes here in this gospel. One theme (spelled out in the final paragraph) clearly outlines God's goodness towards us; that He wants to give GOOD things to His children. The other theme is that we should be persistent in our asking. We might find ourselves asking the question; "What is the need for persistence if God is ready and willing to respond to our needs?" I have one reflection for this. God desires that we would engage in a mutual relationship with Him (which requires us to be adult enough to identify our needs and to be mature enough to ask directly for what we need). That is one part of the equation. God always answers our prayers (the answer is either 'yes, no or wait'). I believe that sometimes God can allow a delay in His answer because 1) He really wants us to wait or 2) He wants us to show how much we want the thing that we are asking for and what we are willing to do to get it. In the case of the story in the gospel this week, we see that the man is willing to be almost obnoxiously persistent on behalf of the need of his traveling friend. Sometimes we don't discover how much we love someone until we are asked to go to extremes on their behalf. How has God allowed your love for another to be tried? What did you discover? Did you discover that you had more love to give than you originally thought? (all parents know this one....).
- 11) Jesus promises that when His disciples ask, they will be given an abundance of the Holy Spirit. (we might think... 'but wait....I was asking for a new car'). God will always give us an abundance of His best gift--- His very Self. How does God continue to give Himself to you? (through the Eucharist? Reconciliation? Scripture? Prayers? Other believers?).