

## **9. Jesus teaches us how to pray.**

### **The Lord's Prayer.**

The Apostles often watched Jesus go off to pray to His Father and, wanting to pray like him, asked Jesus to teach them how to pray. The prayer he taught them we now call The Lord's Prayer or The Our Father. Here are the words he said to them:

**(Matthew 6: 9-13)**

*Our Father in heaven,  
may your name be held holy,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
And forgive our debts,  
as we have forgiven those who are in debt to us.  
And do not put us to the test,  
but save us from the evil one.*

### **Our Father in Heaven**

Jesus tells us that God is our Father as well as his. We are one family in Christ. Jesus shows us the personal relationship we have with God. He is Dad., he is Papa, and we are his family. Jesus called his father, Abba which means daddy! We no longer call God, Yahweh, when we pray. We have been drawn up into the Trinity by Jesus. We are sons and daughters now, through our baptism. We can say with confidence, '**Our Father.**' *'Though father and mother forsake me, the Lord will receive me.'* (Psalm 27: 10)

Jesus described heaven by telling stories called parables.

'This is what the kingdom of God is like. A man throws seed on the land. Night and day, while he sleeps, when he is awake, the seed is sprouting and growing; how, he does not know. Of its own accord the land produces first the shoot, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear. And when the crop is ready, he loses no time: he starts to reap because the harvest has come.' (Mark 4: 26-29)

'What can we say the kingdom of heaven is like? It is like a mustard seed which at the time of its sowing in the soil is the smallest of all the seeds on earth; yet once it is sown it grows into the biggest shrub of them all and puts out big branches so that the birds of the air can shelter in its shade.' (Mark 4: 30-32)

Heaven is our home, and the journey to our home begins in our heart. Our journey begins with Baptism and continues on as we receive the Sacraments, which quite literally, make us holy. For our part it is necessary to study and learn about our faith and to pray always in order to keep our relationship with God fresh and alive. The graces we need for our journey to heaven were won for us on Calvary. Our prayers are the rains which water the

spiritual soil of our souls. God's grace will plant the seeds of faith which will continue to grow throughout our lives, until, like the mustard seed in the parable, the kingdom of God grows to a great size within us. The Saints of the Catholic Church have shown us how all this can be achieved. It is their legacy which continually helps the faithful continue each day on their pilgrim journey through life.

## **Your Name be held Holy**

We must honour God in every way we can. One of those ways is to honour His Name. The word God, or the holy name of Jesus must be used in our everyday lives as a blessing and as a prayer.

We dishonour Father, Son and Holy Spirit when we use the name of Jesus as a curse. We are breaking the second commandment as well. The enemies of Jesus smile when He is ridiculed, his friends make reparation for those who blaspheme Him.

When Jesus is demeaned so too is the whole human race, because we are made in His image and likeness. Jesus is the Word of God made flesh for the life of the world, and we are told in St.John's gospel, that all life has its existence through Him. By our careless use of the holy name of Jesus, we are cheapening the worth of everyone.

Jesus died to save the world and all its people. He paid the ultimate price to ransom us from eternal darkness. When we say the name Jesus, bow your head and acknowledge that he is your Saviour.

Each one of us has a name in heaven. God tells us to fear not, he has called us by name, we are his.(Is.43:10). God considers our name as precious and gives us a sacrament to make our name holy.

'These are the signs that will be associated with believers: **in my name** they will cast out devils; they will lay their hands on the sick, who will recover.'**(Mark16:17, 18)**

## **Your Kingdom**

The Jewish people at the time of Jesus had longed for, and prayed for the promised Messiah, for many hundreds of years. Those who recognized that Jesus was the Messiah had to come to the realization that they were not going to gain freedom from their enemies by force. They had to learn that the Kingdom that Jesus talked of was not of this world at all, but was one which was far more important than an earthly power in a nation state.

The Kingdom of God is established one soul at a time, like the mustard seed, it grows into a large bush which gives shelter to many. Christian love for God and neighbour are the hallmarks of the growth of the Kingdom. The world will know that we are children of the kingdom by our faith, our hope, and our love.

When we are baptized we become members of the Church, which is the Mystical body of Christ. The Church is the sign of God's kingdom on earth. When Jesus returns to earth to gather together His People, they will be with him forever in his glorious kingdom.

The time of his return is called the Last Judgment. In the book of Revelation we read the following description of the Kingdom. 'The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in its place in the city; his servants will worship him, they will see him face to face, and his name will be written on their foreheads. It will never be night again and they will not need lamplight or sunlight, because the Lord God will be shining on them. They will reign for ever and ever.'

**(Revelation22:3-5)**

### **Your will be done on earth**

How will we know God's will for us? What is the meaning of my life? What work does the Lord require of me for the coming of his Kingdom? God gave me free will, can I use it freely?

God gave us the ability to think and to choose. Just as a flower turns its blossom towards the sun so we must turn our faces towards God. In desiring the grace of God and everlasting life we align our everyday choices to those ends. We read scriptures, and learn all we can about God's call to each of us. He says to each one of us exactly the same as he said to the great leaders of the Old and New Testament.

***'I will be your God, and you will be my people.'***

He asked the people of the Old Testament to build a Just Society; today he asks us to do the same. He asked the people of old to obey his commandments in building a just society; today he asks us to do the same. Through his Son, Jesus, the law of love of God and love of neighbour was established. Jesus also corrected some abuses which had become part of the law of Moses.

When we want to know how we must act in a given situation, then look to the directions given to us by Jesus. The Church teaches and guides us all the time. Form within your heart a good, well-informed conscience and act on it. When we divide our trust and our loyalties we run into confusion and difficulties.

After we pray for direction in a difficult situation. We must listen for the 'still, small voice of God' and we will know from deep within ourselves what we are to do. Very often what we choose is not what we were attracted to in the beginning. Take time, pray sincerely, ask for advice of praying people, and listen for God's direction. Follow God's will for you, even if it is not what you would have chosen. 'Not my will, but thine be done'

Speak the truth with love. Live with gratitude, and lift the burdens of others as Simon lifted the cross of Christ. Pray always and then be at peace. Trust in Our Lord and as the song says

'Keep right on to the end of the road' even when you are weary!

Heaven is a place of joy because God's will is perfectly understood. Do not be afraid of God's will, in the end it will bring us to the joy of Heaven. When we exercise our free will we must always remember that we have **not** been given permission to do anything that is against the law of God. When we choose that which is evil we harm ourselves, our neighbour, and break our promises to God. So choose with the love of God as a sure guide, and you will choose God's will.

### **Give us this day our daily bread**

The Israelites who followed Moses into the desert needed to provide enough food each day for the people to prevent them from starving to death. When they saw that they could not live on the food they had, all the Israelites complained to Moses that it would have been better for them all to die in Egypt at the hands of the Pharaoh.

God heard their complaints and told Moses how the people would be provided with bread and meat. (**Exodus 16: 1-36**) 'Now I will rain down bread from the heavens for you.'

Quails flew down in the evening and they covered the camp. The quails provided meat. In the morning, a coating of powder lay on the ground. The powder was collected according to the needs of each family and made into bread. No one was to keep any of the powder, which the people called manna, since it would decay overnight.

Each day the Israelites would place their trust in God to feed them their daily bread. For forty years the people were fed manna in the desert. When Jesus taught his disciples to ask for their daily bread, he also taught them, 'that man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.' (**Matthew 4: 4**)

Daily bread for Christians means all that we need to sustain our bodies, as well as all that we need to sustain our souls. 'Your Father knows that you need all these things ( food, drink, clothing). But seek first the kingdom of God and His justice, and all these things will be given to you besides.' (**Matthew 6: 32-33**)

### **Forgive us our sins ( trespasses) or ( debts), as we forgive those who trespass against us.**

There are two central mindsets which lead people into sin. The first one is a lack of trust and impatience with the pace of God's grace when we have prayed for help. People doubt that God's grace is actually working in their lives and stop praying. The second attitude which leads us into sin is rebellion against the laws of God. In the first case we are saying to ourselves and to God, "Not your will, Father, but my will be done." In the second case we are saying that we have knowledge that what we are planning or actually doing is wrong, but we cannot, or will not stop the sinful act.

We sin against God and neighbour when we refuse to carry out our Christian duties. We sin against God and neighbour when we show no mercy to those who have hurt us in any

way.

***Jesus taught his disciples to 'bless those who persecute you: never curse them, bless them. Rejoice with those who rejoice and be sad with those in sorrow. Treat everyone with equal kindness; never be condescending but make real friends with the poor. Do not allow yourselves to become self-satisfied. Never repay evil with evil but let everyone see that you are interested only in the highest ideals. Do all you can to live at peace with everyone. Never try to get revenge; leave that my friends to God's anger. As scripture says: Vengeance is mine---I will pay them back, the Lord promises. But there is more: If your enemy is hungry, you should give him food, and if he is thirsty, let him drink. Thus you heap red-hot coals on his head. Resist evil and conquer it with good.'***  
**(Romans 12: 14-21)**

**Continue reading Romans, ch. 13 and 14 for more sound advice from Our Lord.**

When we confess our sins to a priest we receive absolution and immediately our broken relationship with Our Lord is healed. God asks us to copy Him when we forgive others. Jesus died for all those who require forgiveness in order that they will have eternal life. He gives his forgiveness with joy when he sees a repentant sinner. He loved us enough to die for us while we were still in sin so he asks us to forgive others.

If someone has sinned against another in an extremely serious manner, and forgiveness seems impossible at a personal level then ask Our Lord to shelter your heart in his, and leave the forgiveness to Him. Ask Our Lord for healing from the wounds in your heart and trust in Him to be a Just Judge as well as a Merciful Saviour.

### **Temptation: do not put us to the test**

Immediately after His baptism by John the Baptist, Jesus went into the wilderness to pray. There he was tempted by the devil for forty days. During that time he ate nothing and at the end of his fast, we are told, that he was hungry.

This is how the devil tempted him when he was at his weakest. *'If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to turn into a loaf.'* The devil was not sure whether he was actually speaking to God's Son and he would love confirmation of it. If Jesus gave in to this temptation the whole earth which had come into being through him would never receive redemption through him; it would not even receive bread since Jesus the Son of God was no longer listening to His Father but listening to the devil instead!.

Jesus replied using the words of Scripture, ***'Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'***

The devil now leads Jesus to a height, and shows Him in a moment of time all the kingdoms of the world, and said to him, *'I will give you all this power and the glory of these kingdoms, for it has been committed to me and I give it to anyone I choose. Worship me, then, and it shall all be yours.'*

Jesus replied again quoting scriptures, ***'You must worship the Lord your God, and serve him alone.'***

In the next temptation Jesus is taken by Satan to Jerusalem and made to stand on the parapet of the Temple. *'If you are the Son of God,'* said the devil, *'throw yourself down from here, for scripture says: He will put his angels in charge of you to guard you, and they will hold you up on their hands in case you hurt your foot against a stone.'*

But Jesus answered him, ***'It has been said: You must not put the Lord your God to the test.'***

Having exhausted all these ways of tempting him, the devil left him, to return at the appointed time. Jesus had come to end of His time of fasting, prayer, and temptation, so he returned to Galilee where he began his public ministry.

Jesus had succeeded where Adam and Eve failed, where King David failed, where all the great and all the common people failed ; he refused to give in to temptation. We too, must follow in Jesus' footsteps in order to help us overcome our own temptations, and to guard ourselves against their empty promises. Jesus told his disciples to ***'pray not to be put to the test.'***

Jesus was tempted in three ways: he was tempted to be a wonder worker only, to make his miracles the main focus and not the Kingdom of God and God's plan for the salvation of the human race. The devil wanted Jesus to obey him and turn away from his Father.

The second temptation was one where Jesus was offered temporal power. Jesus already had all power in heaven and on earth. His Kingdom, he taught his followers, was not of this world, and temporal power would have been a very empty substitute for the life which Jesus was opening up to everyone.

Before his agony in the garden, Jesus said these words to the Apostles in his farewell discourse. ***'I shall not talk with you any longer because the prince of this world is on his way. He has no power over me, but the world must be brought to know that I love the Father and that I am doing exactly what the Father told me. Come now let us go.'***

The third temptation was one which would test whether Jesus would use the scriptures to prove that he was the Son of God, by testing his Father. If he threw himself off the roof of the temple would his Father send Angels to save him? This temptation meant little to Jesus who could control a stormy sea, could bring people who were dead back to life, could walk on water and perform miracles of healing. Satan was definitely out of his element on this temptation!

Jesus knew who he was. He did not need to prove to Satan who he was. Nor was he about to perform some acrobatics to manipulate a response from His Father. This kind of manipulation of the spirit world is called **magic**. Jesus holds all power in Heaven and on Earth. He holds all life in his hands; magic is counterfeit, merely a pretense of the real power of God.

We do not manipulate God to do our will as the pagans do, we simply ask for what we need out of a loving and grateful heart. The devil wanted Jesus to accept magic instead of being our Saviour. How many people today still try to use magic to find out the future or worse still help them make decisions which will affect their lives.

We sin against the Holy Spirit when we use magic. We are showing a huge lack of trust in the covenant we made with God at our Baptism. God will give you all the answers you need when you ask him in prayer. Do not try to bribe God to give you what you want, but in gratitude thank Him in some way which helps the poor whom he loves. Also make it a habit to help the poor whether you get favourable answers or not.

### **Save us from the evil one; deliver us from evil.**

If we were to name all the good things that are being done in the world today, the list would be fairly short, but if we were asked to name all the evil that we know about the list would be fairly long. From the news in papers and on television our hearts sink at the state of our world and how much evil is in it.

We look around to find the just society that God wants and that Our Lord died for but it seems to have been infiltrated by counterfeit ideas of justice. Why is abortion part of societies laws? Why is the child in the womb not welcomed into our society? Why do societies laws not favour the very cornerstone of society, the family?

Did you know that evil was defeated by Our Lord, that the evil one would have no power in this world, if we, with our free will did not give him his power. Saying no to the evil that surrounds us is the only way to lessen its hold on the world. Indeed it is the only way we will find salvation.

Baptism is the Sacrament where we clearly renounce satan, and all his works, and all his empty promises, and Baptism places us in God's presence. We remain in his presence and with faithfulness to our promises we can turn evil aside whenever we meet it and in whatever disguise it comes to us.

Confirmation strengthens our commitment to God and asks us to use the graces we have been given to help create a better world. So begin at home, do your duty there with love for all, and also reach out to those in need. Serving the needs of those suffering because of injustice, being an advocate for those who cannot be heard, constantly praying for God's help and guidance, will help eradicate evil in your part of the world.

Evil finds a home in the human heart, let us, through prayer and love for God be delivered from it once and for all. At every Mass we pray : ***Deliver us from evil, and grant us peace in our day. In your mercy keep us free from sin and protect us from all anxiety as we wait in joyful hope for the coming of our Saviour, Jesus Christ.***

### **The Lord's Prayer or The Our Father**

***Our Father, Who art in heaven, hallowed be Your name; Your kingdom***

*come; Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Amen.*