Mother of God Community
Sunday Night Prayer Meeting
July 15, 2007
The Lord's Prayer
Leo Schneider

The information for tonight's discussion – and I call it a discussion because if we don't discuss, this will be an early evening – came from the website www.jesuswalk.com, "The Lord's Prayer" by Fr. Bill McCarthy, and The United States Catholic Catechism.

I would like you to get out a piece of paper and write out the Lord's Prayer.

Two books of the bible discuss the Lord's Prayer – Matthew 6:9-13 and Luke 11:2-4

Matthew 6:9-13:

9 Pray, then, in this way:
Our Father who is in heaven,
Hallowed be Your name.
10 Your kingdom come
Your will be done,
On earth as it is in heaven.
11 Give us this day our daily bread.
12 And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.
13 And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

Matthew presents 7 petitions

Luke 11:2-4

2 And He said to them, "When you pray, say:
'Father, hallowed be Your name.
Your kingdom come.
3 Give us each day our daily bread.
4 And forgive us our sins,
For we ourselves also forgive everyone who is indebted to us.
And lead us not into temptation.

Luke presents 5 petitions

Matthew 6:9-13 is the version used through the Christian community and the version for tonight's discussion.

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A Beginning, A greeting (Matthew 6:9)

The Lord's Prayer is about 55 words. It begins by us addressing God as "Our Father". This is a radical change – previously in the Old Testament and up to New Testament you would here "Abraham our father", "our father David" but not God being lovingly addressed as Our Father.

The Greek word used for father is *abba*. Abba is as if we were addressing a person as our "Dad" or "Daddy". *Abba* was the word children would call their father throughout their lifetime, even in adulthood. Abba stresses an intimate family relationship. I believe this was the first time that Jesus directly introduced his Father as being Our Father, our Daddy, our Abba.

I meditated on this driving to and from work when asked to give this talk. We hear that God is Our Father but this started me to think even more. Through Christ, God was giving us the opportunity to be HIS children. If you look at the Old Testament you see a vengeful God, a God who, when feed up, punished his people. A God to be feared. Christ has opened the door for us to see a loving God; A God who is a father not only to his Son but also to each one of us. As such, we are his adopted children.

The word "Father" is masculine in nature. But just looking at "Father" in and by itself, the word denotes a relationship. To think that we have the relationship of child to father with God himself is an awesome thought. It again proves Gods willingness and desire to have a loving and intimate relationship with us.

Jesus then teaches us to pray to God "who art in heaven," which adds infinity to our understanding of God. St Augustine wrote "'Our Father Who art in heaven' is rightly understood to mean that God is in the hearts of the just as in His holy temple. At the same time, it means that those who pray should desire the one they invoke to dwell in them."

Now let's look further at the petitions. The first 3 petitions focus on the glory of the Father. The last 4 petitions ask for our needs, our wants to him.

Petition 1: Hallowed be Thy Name (Matthew 6:9)

The first petition is "Hallowed be Thy name." Hallowed means "to treat as holy, reverence" In Greek, the word is *hagiazo*. The phrase, in essence, allows us, his children, to profess that we understand our relationship and who he is. Yes he is Our Father AND he is Our God.

This is not stating that we are "buddy-buddy" with God. There is a Father-child relationship. One of mutual love and respect.

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Petitions 2 and 3: Thy Kingdom and Thy Will (Matthew 6:10)

When we pray, many of us pray directly for the concern. Too often we want to quickly state our own needs and be done with it. Like men shopping. We attack. We get what we want, we pay for it and we leave. In prayer, we "buy and leave". But in Jesus' model prayer, we first pray about the concerns of God's Kingdom and his will.

This is a learning experience for us. We are not to pray selfishly. We are to pray like one of Christ's disciples. Wasn't it their question that Christ is answering with this prayer? So Christ is teaching them that this is how a prayer is to begin. This is how we should learn to pray, to think and to act in our lives.

Petition 2 is "Thy kingdom come....". Petition 3 is "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven". For me, petition 2 and 3 are interlinked. They are difficult to separate and talk about themselves.

"Thy kingdom come... " What is this asking? Are we asking for his kingdom to be here? Or, if we cock our head and look at it 180 degrees, is it rather not what we are asking but what is His plan and that His kingdom, under his plan will come upon us. Petition 3 together with petition 2 bring this thought to light.

"Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

This petition also magnified what Christ did in his life. He does the Fathers will – John 5:19

> Therefore Jesus answered and was saying to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, unless it is something He sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, these things the Son also does in like manner.

Jesus always listened to, discerned and obeyed the voice of the father. And this is something we are also are being asked to do...listen to the Father.

For myself, less than a year ago, I was a babbler in prayer. I would talk and talk and talk. Similar to someone who you might meet at a party and all they do is talk TO you. You are unable to get a word in edgewise. Where was my listening, my discerning? When the Holy Spirit was FINALLY able to get in a word, I saw how I was talking and I laughed at myself. My prayer life is improving but I still talk too much.

So with Petition 2 and 3, we are asking God for his Kingdom to come, as he wills it in both heaven and on earth. We are asking that we pray in harmony to God's will and desire for his people and kingdom.

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Petition 4: For Daily Needs (Matthew 6:11)

We are now in a transition state. Petitions 1, 2, and 3 were prayers focusing on God's glory. Now, starting with the fourth petition, we begin a prayer for our own needs:

"Give us this day our daily bread." This is a curious phrase, because in one short sentence it includes two words that are specific to the current day:

The word translated "This day" is Greek *semeron*, a fairly common word that means "today". But also in the sentence is an extremely rare word, which is usually translated "daily," the word *epiousios*. While scholars love to debate its exact meaning, it probably means either "for today" or "for tomorrow." Whichever it means, it is a prayer for the immediate and not distant future.

So God is asking us to rely on Him, His providential care to supply all of our needs. This is a covenant He has made. We humans, of course, well at least for me, want to be SURE that I make things OK. Yes God, I trust you but… Is it truly trust or is it actually a lack of trust or a lack of understanding that God is in control. You might feel you have the rudder but actually God is at the helm. In Matthew 6:26 it says:

> 26 Look at the birds of the air, that they do not sow, nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they? What is it, look what I do for the birds, what would I do for you?

So often in our world we have a regular salary that comes like clockwork, every two weeks, or bi- monthly or monthly. We take our life and the gifts we have for granted. Only when we encounter a serious situation like a life threatening illness or are laid off from our job, do we begin to ask God for our daily bread. Jesus teaches us to learn to become dependent upon our Father, and to bring to him our daily needs -- though we disciples are to put our own needs after the Father's holiness and kingdom and will.

We need to know or better yet believe that God WANTS to provide for us, for you and me for our daily needs. In the book, "The Our Father", it states it is better to ask for a need than to buy it. They talk about a community needing a new alter. They prayed for a new alter and a Church in Connecticut gave them a beautiful alter. Pray for your needs. "Ask and YOU will receive" You can not serve two masters – put your faith in God.

Petition 5: Forgiveness (Matthew 6:12)

The fifth petition asks for forgiveness but with a wrinkle - a conditional situation. The verse is:

> 12 And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

You mean I have to forgive Johnny before you, God, will forgive ME? That's just not right. Or as Marc has so admirably put, that is just not FAIR. Johnny did this and that and said that and

this and so on and so on. What a volatile situation. This petition is also related to the present/future, forgive our trespasses since we have forgiven (past) those who have trespassed against us.

God is also UNCONDITIONAL and God is LOVE. And forgiveness is God's answer. You see this time and time and time again in the Bible. Even dying on the cross, Christ asked God to forgive us…In Luke 23:34:

[34]Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing."

A question…Sundays' Prayer Meeting, what is written over the front door as many of us walk into the hallway headed for the gym?…forgiveness!

And man is it HARD to forgive by yourself. One way to ask for forgiveness is publicly. The other way is to ask privately. During the prayer meeting, people have publicly stated that the Spirit has convicted them of something and they publicly share what the Spirit has said to them. Before I started coming to the Prayer meetings, Elaine told me that there was one Sunday prayer meeting the community leadership wanted to heal the wounds of division that occurred many years ago. They came before the community and publicly asked for God's forgiveness. What I am going to say next is a feeling. I can not tell you for sure, but hasn't there been a change, a healing started, a renewed building of the community since that public request for forgiveness?

Another great opportunity to ask for forgiveness is through the sacrament of reconciliation. In the Roman Catholic Church it has been called many things, confession, reconciliation, penance, forgiveness and on and on. It is a way for us to ask for God forgiveness, to receive his love, to shed our guilt or our shame or …whatever is present.

"The path of health is forgiveness. The path of healing is forgiving."

Petitions 6 and 7: Temptation and Deliverance (Matthew 6:13)

The second from the last petition asks for Gods' help in times of trial and temptation. We are asking God to be our protector.

(Discuss tractor trailer accident and what God was asking me to do.)

Temptation is not from God. Temptation comes from evil. In James 1:13-14:

[13] Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone.

[14] But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust.

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It is the result of us accepting or consenting to the temptation that leads us to sin which leads us back to the 5th petition of forgiveness.

This petition was one of the hardest for me to fully understand and I am NOT saying that I do! Reading about this, both the Jesus Walk web site, "The Our Father" and the Catechism, say God allows trials or tests in regards to "lead us not into temptation". Thinking back on my life, sometimes the most difficult trials have yielded the greatest "reward" (knowledge, wisdom, insight).

(Discuss the result of the Direct Link Loader in college)

(Discuss some lovely discussions with Elaine – 13th wedding anniversary)

(Discuss where you are with your prayer life – currently on the outskirts of the desert – not worrying because I have faith in Gods' plan and the blessings that will come forth)

The seventh and final petition is:

but deliver us from evil

Now we are NOT talking about banjo music!!

We are asking God to take us away from the evil of Satan. Past, present and future! But looking at this, it is not just me that I am asking to be delivered but "us", Christians and the Church. Therefore, when we are praying the Lords' Prayer, we are not just praying it alone but asking a group or community to be delivered. When saying this last petition, I am asking that all of us be delivered from the evil of Satan.

AMEN….Amen or so be it.

Questions – from Leo Schneider's Talk on the "Our Father"

1. "God will lead us from temptation if we listen." How has God lead you from temptation? How did you listen? Do you feel this statement is legitimate?

2. In saying the Lord's Prayer, it continually references "us", "lead us", "deliver us", etc. Who is the "us" and why does the pray centers around "us" during the last petitions instead of "you"?

3. In our prayer life, how can we consistently pray in harmony to God's will and desire for his people and kingdom and also for our needs?

4. What can you do if you find the hurt just too big to forgive?