

## Reflection for the 17<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Ordinary Time

In our Gospel Reading on this 17<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Ordinary Time we hear of one of Jesus' Disciples seeing Jesus praying and then asking Jesus to teach not just him but to teach all His Disciples to pray. Before we move forward it might be helpful to define the word "pray." We can define this word as the means through which we express our love, gratitude, and dependence on God. It is important to note that prayer is not a one-sided monologue but rather a dialogue where we pour out our hearts to God and listen to our Lord speaking to us. In our Gospel reading this Sunday we hear of Jesus not just showing or providing an explanation of how to pray, rather Jesus provides the words to pray. "*Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come, thy 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.*" This prayer should be very familiar to all of us, for at every Mass after the Doxology the Lord's Prayer is prayed by everyone gathered for Mass. The prayer that Jesus taught His disciples is a part of the Mass, which is the source and summit of our faith. Of course, the Lord's Prayer is also an important part of the Holy Rosary.

The prayer that Jesus taught His disciples to pray when they asked Him to teach them to pray is more than just one prayer. This prayer, the Lord's Prayer, is the archetypal prayer that all Christian prayers are based on. The book *The Rosary of Our Lady*, by Fr. Romano Guardini provides an explanation of the three types of prayer; the first type is the petition prayer requesting that God provide something or do something, the second type is a repentance prayer or gratitude prayer, the final type of prayer is centered around a sojourn with God in service to Him. We can find these three types of prayer contained within the prayer that Jesus teaches His Disciples in our Gospel Reading this Sunday. The petition prayer is found in the words "*give us this day our daily bread,*" clearly this part of the Lord's Prayer is asking that today we be provided for, that we have our "*daily bread.*" It is not wrong to ask for help from God in fact in our First Reading this Sunday taken from the Book of Genesis we hear of Abraham requesting that the city of Sodom be spared if 10 innocent people can be found dwelling there. The second type of prayer is repentance or gratitude, this is the type of prayer that John the Baptist taught his disciples. John the Baptist did not provide his followers with a formal prayer like Jesus does in our Gospel reading this Sunday. What John the Baptist did was to provide his disciples with a clear message that the time they lived in was a time for repentance. John the Baptist clearly informed all how would listen that now is the time to repent, in our prayer lives and in our daily lives. The third type of prayer is found in the words "*as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.*" This third type of prayer is us taking up our crosses and following Jesus in this world and in the next, we are sojourning with Christ Jesus.

The thirty-three years that Jesus spends in this world one like us in all things but sin, is an example for us of how we are to live and pray. The Lord's Prayer is the archetypal prayer of how we are to pray in this world looking forward to the heavenly kingdom. We can look at the three types of prayers that are presented to us by Abraham, John the Baptist and Jesus Christ and see a hierarchy in these three ways of praying. Petition prayer can easily be seen as the first way that we would pray to God, asking Him for what we need and want. Next, we would graduate to an appeal to God with gratitude or repentance seeking to dwell in the presence of God. Finally, we reach the point in our prayer lives that we take up our crosses daily and walk with Jesus Christ in this world and in the next.

The Lord's Prayer that we are presented with today and in fact the structure of the Mass both show us that the three types of prayer that Fr. Romano Guardini explains in his book *The Rosary of Our Lady* are meant to exist together in our daily lives. We as humans should be always able to petition our Lord asking for His help in the challenges and joys of our life journey. May we also be able to seek forgiveness for our sins and repent for our errors and mistakes. Lastly may each one of us be able to take up our crosses daily and follow our Lord in this world and in the next.