

## Seventeenth Sunday Of Ordinary Time

Lk 11: 1-13

Dear Friends,

Today, we have the Lukan version of the Our Father. This special prayer is the culmination and deepest expression of all the prayers in the Bible. It has been described as the summary of the Gospel.

Down through the centuries, the saints, and particularly the Doctors of the Church, have sung its praises. St. Thomas Aquinas called it a prayer of the end times. At our present moment we experience the mystery of salvation in what has been described as **“already but not yet.”** This means that the Pascal Mystery of Christ’s death and resurrection has accomplished our salvation. Yet we are in a process of moving toward the completion of that reality in our Christian life and final destiny of human history. We are moving toward the fullness of the Kingdom of God, the restoration of the original innocence. It still remains an object of hope, a time where we will be completely free of the consequences of sin: no more sickness, division, hatred, violence, ignorance, de-humanizing poverty and prejudice and, finally, death gives way to eternal life. St. Thomas’ point is that the Our Father is a prayer for the coming of the New Day and the New Creation that is God’s Kingdom.

When Jesus gave his followers the Our father, he was offering a way of life. This prayer was a guide of how they were to live and relate to God. This is the prayer for those who wish to walk with Jesus on the journey to the Kingdom.

### ***Our Father***

The great gift of Jesus is that we have become adopted children, allowing us to address our God as Father. When addressing the Father, Luke has Jesus using the term **“Abba”** and invites us to do the same. This is the most intimate and familial expression a child would use in addressing a parent. Matthew uses the term we

translate as **“Father.”** This term is more distinguished and majestic. Both Evangelists direct us into the great mystery that Jesus reveals in the Our Father.

The term **“Our”** identifies us as part of the family of God. Jesus is creating a community of believers to share his relationship with the Father. All our prayers include the personal needs but also take account of all God’s children. All the petitions in this prayer are communal as well as personal.

### ***Hallowed Be thy Name***

Hallowed means to make holy. The request here is that recognizing God’s holiness that we respond to that divine holiness. We are called to be witnesses to God’s holiness as we follow in the footsteps of Jesus in search of his Kingdom.

### ***Thy Kingdom Come***

Jesus reveals the Kingdom as God’s plan. His works and teachings and especially in the death and resurrection disclose God’s action. This is the initiation of the destruction of all the consequences of Adam and Eve’s sin.

Love, justice and mercy have the final say in the Kingdom. Our sins are forgiven, the sick healed, enemies are reconciled, the poor share the blessings of the Lord in abundance and the captives are freed. Every desire in harmony with God’s love is fulfilled. The human venture is brought to a just and peaceful resolution.

In the Lukan version, God’s will clearly is part of the Kingdom we seek in our prayer. Jesus showed us the way in fulfilling the Father’s will. God’s plan is for our freedom leading to eternal happiness. God invites us into that treasure beyond our dreams. In Gethsemane, Jesus showed the power of his surrender to the Father’s will. His acceptance of the divine will produced the passage from death to life for all humankind. God’s will for us, both personally and communally, continues to call us into the fullness of life.

## **The Thou Petitions**

### ***Give Us this Day Our Daily Bread***

By saying give “us” we are again showing our communion with all our brothers and sisters. The bread we ask for includes all material needs of ourselves and others, a steady supply of sustenance. As part of a communion, the needs of others, especially the poor, must be a priority.

At the same time, we are praying for the Bread of Life which includes the Word of God and the Body of Christ in the Eucharist. These gifts of the spirit strengthen and enable us to respond generously in making the petitions real in our life.

### ***Forgive Us Our Trespasses as We Forgive Those Who Trespass against Us***

Reconciliation looks forward to the coming of the Lord in judgment. We are asking for the great gift necessary to enter the Kingdom: forgiveness. Only our willingness to forgive will open the passage to new life. Lack of forgiveness hardens our hearts and closes the way into the merciful love of our God.

### ***Do not subject us to the final test***

We now recognize our human weakness caught in the battle of the spirit and the flesh. We are asking God to protect and guide us away from sin. We are asking for discernment, vigilance and perseverance.

This final test means deliverance from the Evil One who is Satan. We are asking for guidance through the harsh and horrible appeal of all elements in the world that are in total opposition to our salvation. We are asking God to deliver us from all the evils that are the relentless work of the Evil One whose overriding desire is to draw us away from God.