



The Lord's Prayer in Mass

In the Liturgy of the Eucharist, the bread and wine are consecrated and become the real Body and Blood of Jesus. Following this, after the conclusion of the Eucharistic Prayer, the priest and congregation come together to pray the Lord's Prayer. The priest invites all to join in: "At the Savior's command and formed by divine teaching, we dare to say" This begins the Communion Rite. The priest then prepares the Body of Christ to be shared by all, called the Fraction of the Bread.

Why is the Lord's prayer in Mass; when do we say it and why at that time? Is it present in all forms of Mass?

The *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* teaches that since the Eucharist is the Paschal Banquet, the faithful who participate in it, and are properly disposed, should receive the Body and Blood of the Lord as their spiritual food. So, we must prepare ourselves to receive it worthily and fruitfully. The Communion Rite helps to prepare us for this moment through the Lord's Prayer, the Rite of Peace, the Fraction of the Bread.

The Lord's prayer is not optional. It is present in all Mass forms — whether a daily Mass, a solemnity Mass, a funeral Mass, etc. Its presence in Mass began to be documented in the Roman Empire's western half and in the Latin rite in the early centuries of the Church. In all instances, the Church saw this perfect prayer, given to us by our Lord, as a proper means of preparing for Holy Communion:

- ◆ St. Jerome (death 420) attested to the usage of the Our Father in the Mass
- ◆ St. Gregory the Great (d. 604) placed the recitation of the Our Father after the Canon (the Eucharistic Prayer) and before the Fraction.
- ◆ St. Ambrose (d. 397) meditated on the meaning of "daily bread" in the context of the Holy Eucharist.
- ◆ Similarly, St. Augustine, (d. 430) saw the Our Father as a beautiful connection of the Holy Eucharist with the forgiveness of sins.

In seven petitions it sums up the most important aspects of spiritual life — it is the perfect model of how we should pray, what things we should pray for, and in what order. Thus it is fitting that we say the prayer our Lord taught us as we prepare for Communion. The petitions of the Lord's Prayer:

- 1) We should desire the glory and honor of God as the first intention of our prayer, no matter what we may be praying for. Thus, we pray that God's name be honored and held holy.
- 2) Then we pray that his will be done as perfectly among us on earth as his angels accomplish it in his heavenly kingdom. There would be no point in praying unless we wanted God's will to be done. Nothing would be ultimately helpful to us if it were against his will, even if it is what we wanted.
- 3) After these universal intentions—for God's glory and for his will—we pray for the things we need in order to glorify him and be united to him. "Our daily bread" means all that we need to serve him here and now: first, his supernatural gift of his Body in the Holy Eucharist, and then the necessities of life we need each day.

Thus far, the prayer is all about positive things: God's glory and his gifts to us. But there are also obstacles to his glory and his gifts. These are our sins and other people's sins against us.

- 4) We need God's forgiveness for our ungratefulness in sinning, especially when we are in the act of asking him for good things.
- 5) We have to be willing to forgive others if we ourselves want to be forgiven. If we can forgive those who have hurt us, we will be acting like him and pleasing him — God loves a forgiving heart.
- 6) But there is also the struggle against sin when we are tempted. We are in complete need of help and grace; He will be faithful to us in times of trial.
- 7) The last negative: there is the devil, our spiritual enemy who constantly tries to remove us from God's glory, his holiness, his kingdom, his Eucharist, his pardon, and his help. Although the English and Latin versions of the Our Father pray simply for us to be delivered from "evil," the Greek original clearly prays for us to be delivered from the "Evil One." Thus, our most common prayer taught us by the Lord himself contains a little exorcism against the devil.