

July 27, 2027

17th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Luke 11:1-13

Jesus was praying in a certain place, and when he had finished, one of his disciples said to him, “Lord, teach us to pray just as John taught his disciples.” He said to them, “When you pray, say:

Father, hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come.

Give us each day our daily bread
and forgive us our sins
for we ourselves forgive everyone in debt to us,
and do not subject us to the final test.”

And he said to them, “Suppose one of you has a friend to whom he goes at midnight and says, ‘Friend, lend me three loaves of bread, for a friend of mine has arrived at my house from a journey and I have nothing to offer him.’ And he says in reply from within, ‘Do not bother me; the door has already been locked and my children and I are already in bed. I cannot get up to give you anything.’ I tell you, if he does not get up to give the visitor the loaves because of their friendship, he will get up to give him whatever he needs because of his persistence.

“And I tell you, ask and you will receive; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks, receives; and the one who seeks, finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened. What father among you would hand his son a snake when he asks for a fish? Or hand him a scorpion when he asks for an egg? “If you then, who are wicked, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him?”

Background:

In last week’s Gospel, Jesus is the guest of two women, Martha and Mary. In a culture where the lives of men and women were segregated, being a guest of two women would have been unusual and even a source of scandal. When Martha expresses her concern to Jesus that Mary has left her to do the tasks typically assigned to women, Jesus does not support her concern. Instead he tells her that Mary has chosen the better part. Hopefully your prayerful reflection on last Sunday’s Gospel has been meaningful. This Sunday’s Gospel follows immediately after Luke’s description of Jesus being welcomed into the house of Martha and Mary.

Luke often describes Jesus as a person of prayer.

- Luke 3:21 Jesus prays after his baptism
- Luke 6:12 Jesus prays before sending out the twelve
- Luke 9:18 Jesus prays before asking his disciples who people think he is
- Luke 9:29 Jesus prays on the mountain at the Transfiguration
- Luke 11:1 (today’s text)
- Luke 22:39-46 Jesus prays before his arrest, trial, beating and death

In prayer, Jesus finds strength and the guidance he needs to face those especially challenging parts of his life. In today’s text, the disciples ask Jesus to teach them to pray as John has taught his disciples. At least in part they are asking for a prayer form that will identify them as disciples of Jesus and have influence with God as Jesus himself seems to have influence.

It was common for a religious leader to teach their disciples to pray. The text indicates that seeing Jesus at prayer prompted the disciples’ request. There is some discussion among biblical scholars whether what Jesus taught was an actual prayer or a formula to be used in their prayer. Tradition indicates that it has been understood as a prayer; but to see it as a formula for praying could also be part of what Jesus intended.

The prayer itself has an unmistakable communal aspect; all the pronouns are plural. It has three movements: invoking God, glorifying God, and finally petitioning God.

The term “Father” suggests a relationship that is both intimate and childlike. The prayer invites us into relationship with God through Jesus, and asks that God be given the honor that is due; and for the coming reign of God, to the end time when the fullness of God’s plan will be manifest. The prayer for daily bread assumes continuous generosity of God and a constant dependence on God. The petition that God be forgiving carries with it the understanding that those asking are forgiving of others. Lastly, the prayer asks that we not be overwhelmed by temptation.

Following the instruction itself, Jesus uses a parable to instruct the disciples that they should be persistent in their prayer. In the parable, the friend responds because of his neighbor’s persistence, not because it was the right thing to do or because he will face public embarrassment if he does not. Finally, Jesus instructs the disciples that God knows how to give good things to those who ask, but they must ask.

Most people to whom Jesus preached were peasants and those who had very little control over their own lives. Governments, religious institutions, and the few wealthy of the day made most decisions for people. Developments in science, medicine, and technology have given many the ability to make choices around their life and a sense of control not experienced by the peasant of Jesus’ day.

Reflection Questions:

1. Do you have a favorite time, place, or way to pray?
2. When you pray, how do you usually approach God?
 - Do you invoke, glorify, or petition Him?
3. Have you ever asked God to help you pray, teach you to pray, or give you the desire to pray?
4. Can you recall a time when you were unexpectedly led into prayer? What was that like?
5. What do you do when prayer feels difficult or distant?
6. When did you feel closest to God this week?
7. Who has taught you how to pray or served as a model of prayer in your life?
8. Why do you think the “Our Father” is included in every Mass and many public prayer services?
 - Is it personally meaningful to you?
9. Take a moment to talk to God about your prayer life.
 - What do you enjoy?
 - What would you like to change?
 - How has your prayer evolved over time?
10. Do you sense that God is pleased when you pray?
 - Like the disciples in the Gospel, do you long for God to teach you how to pray?
 - Share your thoughts, hopes, or questions with God freely.

The Gospel background and reflection questions are written by Fr. Paul Gallagher, OFM. They are edited by Sister Anne Marie Lom, OSF and Joe Thiel. The excerpts from the Sunday readings are prepared by Joe Thiel. To be added to the distribution list, send your name and email address to fr.paul.gallagher.ofm@gmail.com.

Our Gospel Reflections are hosted by the Franciscan Sisters of Christian Charity. Their homepage is <https://fscs-calledtobe.org/>. One link there is labeled Franciscan Gospel Reflections. A click on the icon will take you to the Gospel reflections for the upcoming Sunday. By following this link, you will be able to blog or comment on the reflection questions. The material will be posted on Fridays and will be available until the following Friday when the new material is posted.

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Excerpts from the readings for July 27, 2025, the Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

The Lord said: "The outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is so great, and their sin so grave, that I must go see whether their actions fully correspond to the cry against them. I mean to find out." Abraham said: "Will you sweep away the innocent with the guilty? Suppose there were fifty innocent people in the city; would you wipe it out, rather than spare it for the sake of the fifty innocent people? Should not the judge of all the world act with justice?" The Lord replied, "If I find fifty innocent people in the city, I will spare it." Abraham said: "What if there are five less than fifty innocent people? He answered, "I will not destroy it, if I find forty-five there." But Abraham persisted, saying "What if only forty are found there?" He replied, "I will forbear doing it for the sake of the forty." Then Abraham said, "Let not my Lord grow impatient if I go on. What if only thirty are found there?" He replied, "I will forbear doing it if I can find but thirty there." Still Abraham went on, "Since I have thus dared to speak to my Lord, what if there are no more than twenty?" The Lord answered, "I will not destroy it, for the sake of the twenty." But he still persisted: "Please, let not my Lord grow angry if I speak up this last time. What if there are at least ten there?" He replied, "For the sake of those ten, I will not destroy it."

Lord, on the day I called for help, you answered me. I will give thanks to you, O Lord, with all my heart, for you have heard my words; in the presence of the angels I will sing your praise. The Lord is exalted, yet the lowly he sees, and the proud he knows from afar. Though I walk amid distress, you preserve me; against the anger of my enemies you raise your hand. Your kindness, O Lord, endures forever; forsake not the work of your hands.

Brothers and sisters: You were buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead. And even when you were dead in transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, he brought you to life along with him, having forgiven us all our transgressions; obliterating the bond against us, with its legal claims, which was opposed to us, he also removed it from our midst, nailing it to the cross.

One of his disciples said to Jesus, "Lord, teach us to pray just as John taught his disciples." He said to them, "When you pray, say: Father, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come. Give us each day our daily bread and forgive us our sins for we ourselves forgive everyone in debt to us, and do not subject us to the final test." He said to them, "Suppose one of you has a friend to whom he goes at midnight and says, 'Lend me three loaves of bread, for a friend has arrived from a journey and I have nothing to offer him,' and he says, 'Do not bother me; the door is locked and my children and I are already in bed. I cannot get up to give you anything.' I tell you, if he does not get up to give the visitor the loaves because of their friendship, he will get up to give him whatever he needs because of his persistence. "I tell you, ask and you will receive; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. Everyone who asks, receives; the one who seeks, finds; to the one who knocks, the door will be opened. What father among you would hand his son a snake when he asks for a fish? Or hand him a scorpion when he asks for an egg? If you then, who are wicked, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him?"

Excerpts from Genesis 18:20-32; Psalm 138:1-8; Colossians 2:12-14; and Luke 11:1-13

Friends,

Here are the Gospel background and reflection questions for July 27th, as prepared by Franciscan spiritual director Fr. Paul Gallagher. In the Gospel from Luke, Jesus talks about prayers and answers to prayers. The passage starts with Jesus teaching the “Our Father” prayer. He then tells the parable about going to a friend at midnight for bread for an unexpected guest. “If he does not get up to give the loaves because of their friendship, he will because of his persistence. Ask and you will receive; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.” Also, the Father bestows good when his children ask. “What father among you would hand his son a snake when he asks for a fish, or a scorpion when he asks for an egg?”

The other readings also have references to asking in prayer for even seemingly impossible concerns, dialog with the Lord, persistence in the dialog, and prayers being answered. In the first reading from Genesis, Abraham inquires of the Lord, while on his way to investigate the outcry about Sodom: “Suppose there were fifty innocent people in the city; would you wipe out the place, rather than spare it for the sake of the fifty innocent people within it?” Psalm 138 proclaims, “Lord, on the day I called for help, you answered me. Though I walk amid distress, you preserve me.” In the second reading, from the letter to the Colossians, Paul writes, “You were raised with Christ through faith in the power of God.”

Today’s Gospel has three lessons about prayer and answers to prayer. Jesus teaches his disciples his best-known prayer, he uses the parable to remind us all to be persistent in prayer, and he assures us that the Father knows how to be good to his children. When someone is persistent, the one who is asked “will get up to give him whatever he needs.” For us who are this Father’s children by faith, he goes so far as “obliterating the bond (of our wrongdoings) against us, removing it from our midst, nailing it to the cross.” “If you who are wicked know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him?”

Joe

> i < May the Word light your way each day!