

'PRAYING TO GOD IN 2019'
FOUR QUESTIONS IN 2019 ABOUT PRAYER

17th Sunday Ordinary Year C, 28th July 2019

WE COME BEFORE GOD IN PRAYER

MATTHEW & LUKE'S VERSIONS OF THE LORD'S PRAYER

This Sunday's Gospel is from Luke.

It explains the way that Jesus taught his disciples to pray.

MATTHEW'S VERSION

Matthew's version is familiar to us because it is closest to the form we pray at Mass, in the rosary, in communal prayer, in private prayer.

LUKE'S VERSION

Luke's version refers to daily prayer. And its context sustains us in our spirituality.

Why mention context?

Because the Lord's Prayer follows on from the Parable of the Good Samaritan, and the encounter of Jesus with Martha and her sister Mary.

These passages are all connected in Luke's Gospel.

CONTEXT OF LUKE'S VERSION:

1) PARABLE GOOD SAMARITAN

The Good Samaritan parable challenges us to be inclusive, to act justly, to overcome fear, to break down prejudices, to respect each other.

It corrects the attitude of the priest and the Levi who walk by on the other side.

The parable calls us to be active, serving, and full of compassion.

It is a parable of loving service.

2) MARY AND MARTHA

The encounter of Jesus with Martha and Mary was also inclusive.

Mary broke down a gender barrier, as she sat at the feet of Jesus, listening.

The disciples of Jesus are women and men.

As disciples, we listen at the feet of Jesus.

Martha complained about Mary.

So often we can do the right thing (offering Jesus hospitality) yet for impure motives (putting Mary down).

Working long hours, surviving by adrenalin, sometimes Christian activists can burn out or miss the whole picture.

Their advocacy can be very important, yet we all need time to listen at the feet of Jesus, to be renewed.

That's why we are called to *work with God, not for God*.

Called to *work with our neighbour, not for them*.

In today's Gospel, Jesus was on the final road to Jerusalem where he would face suffering and the cross, before rising from the dead. He took the time to visit their house. Of course it was the time to listen, to sit at the feet of Jesus. Each day we too are invited to find time to listen. To invite Jesus to our house or flat or unit. To listen to him. To be contemplative.

3) LORD'S PRAYER

Having put *both experiences together, loving action and loving attentive listening, then the disciples wanted Jesus to teach them how to pray.*

The Lord's Prayer, the 'Our Father' is *a way of praying, not just a set prayer.* We bring our praise of God, we thank our God, we place our petitions, our need for the daily bread, our need to forgive others, our need for God to protect us from evil. We include the extra petitions that Matthew includes. Taking time to pray this way calls us to be humble.

4) TEACHING ON PRAYER

Following these three passages of Luke, Jesus taught the disciples to *persevere*, and to *ask*, to *search* and to *knock*.

Searching and knocking suggest some time and energy is important.

All are invited to take time to ponder each section of the *Our Father*, before praying it. Open it up.

Ask ourselves –

How do we live out each step of praying over our day, over our week?

FIVE QUESTIONS ON PRAYER

1) WHAT DO PEOPLE ASK YOU TO PRAY FOR?

It is always a privilege to be asked by someone to pray.

People ask for prayers for many other people, for themselves and for special requests.

Sometimes they ask that I pray quietly for their intention, other times they ask others to pray also.

Public prayers for the sick, the recently deceased and memorial requests sometimes are printed in our parish newsletter so that others too can pray.

In preparation for our school class-masses (St Joseph's Primary), and College house Masses (St. John Fisher College)

teachers can include special prayers concerning their classes, or concerning the lives of the students, the charisms of the pastoral houses and special events.

Children have their own ways of expressing their prayers. They have a sense of wonder.

Of thanking God for a sunny day, or a rainbow, or rain when it is too dry.

Children, more than adults, ask me to pray for their *pets*,

and to ask God to help them care for their pets.
Children will ask sometimes for prayers for their Grandparents
and parents and brothers and sisters.
High School students add their insights as they pray about their world.

Before or after weekend Masses, people can ask a *blessing*
for their birthday or wedding anniversary or pending travel.

Near exams times, some will ask for prayer for their *study*.
People expecting *surgery* or *medical procedures* or *medical tests*
in the coming week might ask for prayer.
People who have **recovered** from surgery or from illness
might ask me to join them in thanking God for the **healing**.

The Sacrament of Anointing is available on special occasions during the year,
as well as before or after any Mass during the year, or by request.
It is a sacred moment when someone is anointed.
In all requests, the people are praying themselves first of all.

2) WHAT DO THE LOCAL COMMUNITY PRAY FOR TOGETHER?

According to Luke's Gospel, we pray daily.
Every Mass during the Eucharistic prayer,
we include the Pope and the Bishop of the local diocese.
We pray for special intentions including those who have died.

During the **Prayers of the Faithful**, we pray for those who are sick,
those who have died recently,
for youth and young adults
for *vocations*.
for our sister communities in *South Sudan*
and in *Blackall/Tambo* Parish in central Queensland,
We hold bucket collections for South Sudan and for Blackall/Tambo Parish.
Prayer for them as a community is very important.

The last petition in the Prayers of the Faithful, is often a *silent time*
where everyone is invited to pray for those people
they would like to pray for in this Mass.

During weekday Masses, anyone can voice their intention respectfully
at the prayers of the faithful. We take time to be inclusive.

3) WHAT VARIES IN THE PRAYER FROM WEEK TO WEEK?

Inspired by the "**Our Father**", we pray for ourselves, that we respond to God's will,
that we forgive others, that we live in loving relationship with God and each other.
We pray for our neighbour, for the earth our common hope.

Our liturgy groups prepare the general intercessions in advance for their rostered weekends.

Then more recent prayers can be added.

It could be the addition of prayer intentions by Pope Francis, or our Archdiocese, or people in urgent need.

We pray for our children, and those over the next few weeks, preparing to receive the **Sacrament of Confirmation** in October.

We pray for all those preparing for **the fete** this coming Saturday.

At **Parish Pastoral Council**, during formation time, we have reflected during the last two monthly meetings on the **APEST instrument**. **APEST** stands for **Apostle, Prophet, Evangelist, Shepherd and Teacher**. We take the time to discern which describes each of us and we pray about it.

During late July/early August there is a time of discernment for adults who have been in the **catechumenate** journey (**Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults – RCIA**) in the parish.

Let us pray for them at this special time of discerning how God is calling them.

We pray for our Archdiocese as we prepare for our **Brisbane Assembly in October**, and for the national **Plenary Council in 2020**.

Last weekend we prayed across our deanery parishes for Catholic Missions.

In early June we prayed especially over 2 weeks for our children receiving their **First Communion**. And the ministry of the **local St Vincent de Paul Society**.

Recently we prayed on the **Feast of Mary of Magdala** for all women in ministry in the church.

We pray for the **Iraqi and Syrian families** who settled into life on the Northside of Brisbane.

We prayed in early July for our **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander brothers and sisters**, on National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Sunday and on the second weekend of July at the closure of NAIDOC.

We remember special nominated times during the year and bring them to prayer.

We pray for those who have suffered from **domestic violence** and church and institutional child and vulnerable adult abuse.

We pray for **protection for the gift of life**.

We pray for **peace** in our world, in our country and in our neighbourhood and families.

We respond in prayer when we hear of **tragedies** through the media and pray for those bringing healing and comfort and peace on those occasions.
(A reference link to some of our prayer intentions is on our parish website.)

On September 14th, we will join with others in Brisbane Archdiocese to pray for the Christians in particular, and for *all people of Iraq*.

September 14th, the Feast of Exaltation of the Cross,
is the time when Archbishop Warda in northern Iraq asks the people of Brisbane Archdiocese to pray with them.

Some of the many forthcoming prayer intentions over the new two months will include

- Commitment weekend August 10/11 for parents enrolling their children for preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation
- The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary on August 15th
- Our Young Adult Prayer Day on August 17th
- Franciscan Chaplain, Fr Harry from Australian Catholic University, will lead us in weekend Eucharist on August 24/25
- Father's Day weekend of Sep 1st
- Season of Creation from September 1st – October 4th
- Catholic Campaign for Archdiocesan ministries September 7/8
- Parish Child Protection weekend September 14/15
- Preparation for Group Baptisms of Children on August 11th and 31st, and September 8th.
- Parish Care for Creation weekend September 21/22.
- National Social Justice Sunday September 28/29.

And in our parish community, some have a tradition over 5 years, at stopping at 8pm, wherever we are and praying for a moment or for a few minutes. This we call *pray@8*. Our Tuesday evening Men's Group, Our Ladies Prayer Group on Wednesdays, our Friday Evening Prayer Vigil, weekend and weekday Masses and other times are opportunities to pray for special intentions. Prayer intentions for social justice, for charity, for tragedies, for issues highlighted by the media, can vary from week to week.

4) DO YOU PRAY FOR OTHERS WHEN YOU ARE NOT IN CHURCH?

Even at secular meetings where vocal prayer is not on the agenda, we can still pray silently to God for the meeting, its participants and issues.

*Seeing or reading the news on our mobile or on TV,
do we take a moment to pray for people and situations that touch us?
Reading the newspaper, do we pray for someone mentioned?
After someone phones us, do we take a moment to pray for that person,
or pray before we phone someone else?*

If we are catching the train to the city for a meeting, it can be a wonderful opportunity to pray for all the people that we will meet that day.

Having a walk at the end of the day is a great time

to pray for all the people who we've met that day.

Washing up, doing the laundry, etc. can be an opportunity for praying for others or ourselves.

Perhaps you have a chair at home where you love to sit and pray.

Praying in thanksgiving to God for so much.

REPENTANCE

In our prayer, we find that repentance and conversion are lifelong.

May we be open to the words of Jesus: '**Repent and believe the Good News**'.

The spiritual director Gerard W. Hughes SJ reminded us in his book 'God of Surprises' (p74-75 DLT London 1985) that these words of Jesus are *an invitation, not a threat*.

He said that '*marks of true repentance*'

*"frees from self-preoccupation because our trust is in God's goodness working in us.
In his light we see our darkness."*

"brings joy and inner freedom."

"can welcome criticism and learn from it."

"brings understanding, tolerance and hope."

"brings compassion and therefore a sharpened sensitivity to all forms of injustice."

"shares God's laughter and frees the mind to see the humour of all situations"

"In true repentance a person feels drawn to God".

Let us now pray for Anna and Laila, newly baptized during this Mass,
Thanking God for our being loved by God, may we grow in our love of God.
Let us pray.

Fr. Gerry

[<http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/072819.cfm>]



The Lord's Prayer | James Tissot | public domain