

Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time (Year C)

[Reading I: Genesis 18:20-32a](#)

[Responsorial Psalm: 138:1-2, 2-3, 6-7, 7-8](#)

[Reading II: Colossians 2:12-14](#)

[Gospel: Luke 11:1-13](#)

Readings may be found on the US Bishop's website:

<https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/072422.cfm>



Mid-eastern bread

The gospels regularly present Jesus spending time in prayer. Prayer was an essential component of Jesus' life. His prayer was not just an expression of words, but a deep communication based on intimacy. Jesus spent time communing with God and in his humanity, grasping the mind and heart of God so that he could live his mission.

The disciples asked Jesus to teach them to pray. Jesus responds with a series of statements that will bring the disciples into this deep intimate relationship. It is not that these are the secret words that will get God's attention. Rather, these are the attitudes that will lead one into an intimacy with God. If one takes these to heart, one will grasp the way God is at work. They are a summary of the way a community of believers can express their common direction and attitude.

"Our Father" expresses two key attitudes. When one prays "Our", one is expressing one's relationship with all others whom God has created. No one is left out. There can be no exclusion, prejudice, or discrimination. One stands with all people of every land and culture as a child of God.

"Father" expresses a deep and lasting relationship with the person who is praying. Jesus used the familial term, Abba. Along with Imma, these are the first words that a child learns. One spoke of my Abba, not another's father. It reflects the permanent and lasting relationship that God has with each person. God will not stop being that parent who is concerned and present in one's life.

The petitions that follow, "hallowed be they name", "thy kingdom come", and "thy will be done", all direct us in living life in union with the Father. The last set petitions God for what one really needs in life, sustenance, forgiveness, protection of one's path, and preservation from evil. If this manifests one's direction, one's life will be fulfilled.

Jesus then illustrates the Father's concern and commitment with a parable and then describes God's desire to answer each person through a series of sayings. Jesus completes the discourse by emphasizing God's great desire to "give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him." The greatest desire that God has is to share God's own life with each person. As much as each person wants good for those close to her or him, God has an even greater desire to share life with us. In sharing in the Spirit, one shares in the life of God. All any one needs to do is sincerely ask God for the Spirit.

The reading from Genesis presents God as appearing in human form and taking on human characteristics. God does not know how grave the sinfulness of Sodom and Gomorrah is so God must go and find out for himself. This is a very early conception of God.

The passage does not focus on Sodom or Gomorrah but on the justice of God. Abraham asks God if God will punish the city if there are 50 or 45 or 40 down to 10 just people. God declared that God acts justly and would destroy the just with the guilty. The messengers of God lead Lot, his wife, and their two daughters out of the city before it is punished. This serves to highlight that God is truly just and does not act conveniently as humans sometimes do.

Additionally, the passage illustrates the value of intercessory prayer. Abraham petitions God repeatedly with ever smaller numbers to seek justice for the innocent. The themes of intercessory prayer and persistence in prayer can be brought to the attention of catechumens. The text illustrates that prayer is not just finding the right formula but rather engagement in a relationship with God.

The passage from the Letter to the Colossians highlights the impact of baptism. In baptism, each person has died to the old way of life without God, been buried with Christ, and raised to a new life. God raised us. It was not by human effort nor activity but by the work of God that people come to new life. In that transformation, each person is forgiven. All one's sins and guilt is removed is wiped out by God's action who united it to the cross of Christ. In baptism, one is freed from all the sin and disorientation that had accumulated in life. One has a new life to live in freedom and confidence in union with Christ.

Reflection Questions:

How do you address God?

How do the statements about forgiveness in the Lord's Prayer impact you?

What is the daily bread for which you pray?

What does "your kingdom come" mean for you?

Themes:

Titles for God

Prayer

Our Father

Forgiveness

The impact of Baptism

Prayer Suggestions:

For the Church: that, like Abraham, we may grow in our friendship with God and honestly present our needs to God each day

For the grace to be ministers of reconciliation: that we may witness to God's mercy by offering forgiveness to one another and by seeking forgiveness when we have injured someone

For persistence in prayer: that the Spirit will teach us how to authentically express our deepest needs to God in prayer and give us strength never to grow tired of calling upon God for assistance

For a deeper appreciation of our baptism: that we may recognize the great gift of our new life in Christ and faithfully live as daughters and sons of God

For all who need daily bread: that God will open new opportunities for them to access food and touch the hearts of all who have an abundance to share more freely