

Catechumenate Session

APPRENTICES IN FAITH: A Resource for the OCIA
Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time • Year C • July 27, 2025

*O God,
when we were lost
and could not
find our way to you,
you reached out to us,
sending us your Son
to guide us,
to show us the way,
to teach us.
Fill us with your Spirit.
Open our lips
and our lives to praise you!*



Sunday Word

Genesis 18:20-32
Psalm 138:1-3, 6-8
Colossians 2:12-14
Luke 11:1-13

Faithfully Seeking

Abraham walks with God. He seeks to understand the mind and the will of God in relation to the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah. Abraham faithfully probes the extent of God's mercy, which he discovers is supple and extensive.

Powerfully Forgiven

Saint Paul uses a powerful image to express the complete forgiveness that is ours through Baptism: our sins are removed from our midst and nailed to the Cross by God. Life thus opens before us in a radical new way through the gift presented to us in Christ.

Spiritually Opened

In response to a disciple's request, Jesus teaches them to pray. He encourages his followers to approach his heavenly Father to ask, seek, and knock in prayer. Jesus concludes by referring to the Holy Spirit, a spiritual sign and seal by which believers become more like Christ.

Church Teaching: The Lord's Prayer

The Prayer of Jesus

In the course of his life and public ministry, Jesus prayed frequently to his heavenly Father. At one point after praying, a disciple asked that Jesus teach them to pray just as John the Baptist had taught his own disciples to pray. In response to this request, Jesus entrusted to them and to his Church *the* fundamental Christian prayer.

Why do we consider this prayer as the quintessential text of Christians who pray? First—as portrayed by Sacred Scripture—the words that make up this prayer come to us from Christ himself. He bequeathed this prayer to his own disciples, and they, in turn, have handed it on to all the followers of Jesus. For this reason, the prayer is described as “the Lord's Prayer,” because it originates with him.

Second, everything contained in the Old Testament—that is, the Law and the prophets—is fulfilled in Jesus Christ. The Gospel illuminates this fulfillment and is therefore rightly called “Good News.” The first proclamation of this Good News can be found in the teaching of Jesus as summarized by Saint Matthew, commonly called the “Sermon on the Mount.” The Lord’s Prayer is the centerpiece of this teaching and, for us believers, expresses it both succinctly and reverently. Both in the Sermon on the Mount and in the Lord’s Prayer, we are given a new form for our desires—that is, for the inner movements that animate our lives. Jesus teaches us this new life by his words and by this prayer.

How the Prayer Unfolds

The particular genius of this prayer can be perceived in the way in which it unfolds, first beginning with an expression of praise to God the Father and then proceeding with a series of petitions.

The New Testament preserves this prayer in two places. Two of the four Gospel accounts contain it (today’s selection, Luke 11:2-4, and Matthew 6:9-13). Luke’s version presents a text of five petitions. Matthew’s version presents a text of seven petitions.

The Prayer of the Church

In liturgical usage, the Church retains Matthew’s version. It is prayed daily by the Church to begin and end the day at Morning Prayer and Evening Prayer. The Lord’s Prayer is also prayed by the worshiping community when sacraments are celebrated precisely because it is the fundamental prayer of Christians.

Distinctiveness of Church Teaching

The elect, during the Period of Purification and Enlightenment, receive the words of the Lord’s Prayer as it is handed on to them by the community of the faithful. They are invited to come forward, nearer to the pulpit, as the Gospel is proclaimed.

Like all Christians, they are to internalize the words of the prayer and make them their own, so that it never becomes a mere rote recital. Later, when the elect—prior to receiving Holy Communion for the first time at the Easter Vigil—recite the Lord’s Prayer, those words well up from within, expressing their heart’s desire to celebrate the eternal banquet in the heavenly kingdom.

Key Terms

ELECT

God’s Chosen People. In the New Testament, the elect are those whom Christ will gather to himself at the end of time. The term also is used to describe unbaptized adults who enter the third period (Purification and Enlightenment) of the process of Christian initiation (OCIA). Baptismal grace “is a grace of free and unmerited election” (see *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 1308).

ESCHATOLOGICAL

Derives from the Greek *eschaton*, which means “last.” Eschatology is that area of Christian faith that concerns itself with the “last things,” the coming of Jesus on the final day, when human history will culminate in him (see *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 1002).

SERMON ON THE MOUNT

The first of five discourses by Jesus found in Matthew’s Gospel (chapters 5–7). Jesus goes up a mountain (an allusion to Moses receiving the Law) to deliver this discourse to his disciples, and speaks to them seated, as a teacher (see *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 1968).

Voices of Faith

We ask that the kingdom of God may come to us. . . . Christ himself, dearest beloved, is the kingdom of God, whom we day by day desire to come, whose advent we crave to be quickly manifested to us.

—Saint Cyprian

Clearly, the Christian who prays does not claim to be able to change God’s plans or correct what he has foreseen. Rather, he seeks an encounter with the Father of Jesus Christ, asking God to be present with the consolation of the Spirit to him and his work.

—Pope Benedict XVI

Further Reading

Catechism of the Catholic Church: 2761 (summary of the Gospel), 2765 (unique prayer), 2766 (the spirit of the prayer)

United States Catholic Catechism for Adults: Chapter 36 (Jesus Taught Us to Pray), especially “This Is How You Are to Pray,” pages 481–483

Compendium—Catechism of the Catholic Church: 578 (no substitute for this prayer), 579 (essential content of the Gospel)