

# Sunday 17th (C) in Ordinary Time

**Gospel text (Lk 11,1-13): One day 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». And Jesus said to them, «When you pray, say this: ‘Father, hallowed be your name, may your kingdom come, give us each day the kind of bread we need, and forgive us our sins, for we also forgive all who do us wrong, and do not bring us to the test’».**

**Jesus said to them, «Suppose one of you has a friend and goes to his house in the middle of the night and says: ‘Friend, lend me three loaves, for a friend of mine who is traveling has just arrived and I have nothing to offer him’. Maybe your friend will answer from inside: ‘Don't bother me now; the door is locked and my children and I are in bed, so I can't get up and give you anything’. But I tell you, even though he will not get up and attend to you because you are a friend, yet he will get up because you are a bother to him, and he will give you all you need. And so I say to you, ‘Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and it will be opened to you’. For the one who asks receives, and the one who searches finds, and to him who knocks, the door will be opened. If your child asks for a fish, will you give a snake instead? And if your child asks for an egg, will you give a scorpion? Even you evil people know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more then will the Father in heaven give holy spirit to those who ask him!».**

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*«Jesus was praying... ‘Lord, teach us to pray’»*

Today, Jesus praying teaches us how to pray. Let us pay great attention to what his attitude enlightens us. Quite often, Jesus Christ feels the need to meet face-to-face with his Father. In his Gospel, Luke emphasizes this point.

What were they talking about that day? We do not know. On the other hand, some where else, we have located a fragment of a conversation between his Father and Himself. It was when He was baptized in the Jordan River, and He was in prayer, «And a voice came from heaven, «You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased» (Lk 3:22). It is an intermission in a tenderly affectionate dialogue.

When in today's Gospel, one of the disciples, realizing His meditation, pleads him to teach them how to speak with God, Jesus replies: «When you pray, say this: Father, hallowed be your name...» (Lk 11:2). The prayer consists of a filial conversation with this Father that loves us madly. Did not Teresa of Avila define a prayer as «nothing else than a close sharing between friends; it means taking time frequently to be alone with him who we know loves us»?

Benedict XVI finds «significant for Luke to place the Lord's Prayer in the context of Jesus' personal prayer. Thus, he let us share his praying; He takes us inside the intimate dialogue of Trinitarian love; in other words, He lifts our human weaknesses up to the very heart of God».

It is notable that, in our current language, the prayer Jesus Christ taught us may be encapsulated in these two single words: «Our Father». The Christian prayer is eminently filial.

The Catholic liturgy puts this prayer upon our lips when we are about to receive the Body and Blood of Christ. The seven petitions that it entails and their own sequence give us an idea of the kind of behavior we have to take on when we receive the Holy Communion.