Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time (C)

Gospel text (*Lk* 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."

The "Lord's Prayer": the 4th petition (our daily bread)

EDITORIAL TEAM evangeli.net (based on texts by Benedict XVI)
(Città del Vaticano, Vatican)

Today, the fourth petition of the Our Father appears to us as the most "human" of all the petitions: though the Lord directs our eyes to the essential, to the "one thing necessary," he also knows about and acknowledges our earthly needs.

While He says to his disciples, "Do not be anxious about your life, what you shall eat", He nevertheless invites us to pray for our food. Bread is "the fruit of the earth and the work of man", but the earth bears no fruit unless it receives sunlight and rain from above. This coming together of cosmic powers, outside our control, stands opposed to the temptation that comes to us through our pride to give ourselves life purely through our own power.

—Furthermore, here, the reference is to "our" bread: we pray in the communion of the disciples, in the communion of the children of God, and for this reason no one may think only of himself. We pray for our bread—and that means we also pray for bread for others.

The "Our Father": the 4th petition (the bread of the Eucharist)

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Today, the petition of the "bread for today" reminds us of the forty years of the march through the desert, during which the people of Israel lived out of the manna God sent them –day after day- from heaven.

In fact the fathers of the Church have interpreted almost in unanimity the fourth petition of the "Our Father" as the petition of the Eucharist. Thus, the Prayer of the Lord appears in the Liturgy of the holy Mass as if it was the blessing over the Eucharistic table. The fathers think over the different meanings of this expression that springs from the petition for the daily bread from the poor: it is precisely in that way -looking up to our Father in heaven who feeds us- reminds us of the wondering people of God, who He

himself fed.

The miracle of the manna, to the light of the great sermon of Jesus about the bread, almost immediately transported the Christians to the beyond, to the new world where the eternal Word of God will be our bread, the food of the eternal wedding banquet.