

Script - Episode 6 - The Communion Rite, The Dismissal

The Lord's Prayer was taught by Jesus to his disciples when they asked him how to pray. The Church celebrates it as the most cherished prayer and gives it a prominent place in the Mass - the beginning of the Communion Rite.

For some of us this prayer might be a routine prayer that we learned from young and simply repeat every Sunday. But it should never be taken for granted. The priest notes what a privilege it is for us to be able to talk to God in this way:

"At the Savior's command and formed by divine teaching, we dare to say ..."

What is it that we dare to say? "Our Father". This is precisely what Jesus calls us to do. It underscores the intimate relationship we now have with God because of Jesus' work of salvation. We share his life because he came to share ours. Through our union in Christ, God has truly become our Father.

And the word "Our" in this prayer points to the deep unity we have together by virtue of our common heavenly Father. All who are united in Christ are truly brothers and sisters in him. We are one with each other because we are one with Jesus, our Lord.

The Lord's Prayer has traditionally been divided into seven petitions with the first three focused on God - "thy name, thy kingdom, thy will" - and the last four petitions focused on our needs - "give us, forgive us, lead us, deliver us."

The priest elaborates on our last petition in the next prayer :

"Deliver us, Lord, we pray, from every evil, graciously grant peace in our days, that, by the help of your mercy, we may be always free from sin and safe from all distress, as we await the blessed hope and the coming of our Saviour, Jesus Christ"

The biblical understanding of peace is much more than an absence of war or hostility in the world. It is something personal and spiritual, an inner wholeness and well-being when we entrust all that we are and all that we have to God.

Going against God's will, however, leads to a loss of peace. If we give in to selfishness, pride, envy or greed we will be insecure, restlessly seeking more control, more wealth, or more pleasure, while being constantly worried about losing what we already possess.

We might also worry about the future, about suffering or be anxious about a situation at work or in our families. When these preoccupations dominate our hearts and cause us to lose the peace of God, it is a sign that we are not truly trusting God with our lives.

We therefore acknowledge God as the Lord of our lives and praise him for all the blessings he bestows upon us, Whatever good we might do, whatever success we might experience, ultimately comes from God:

"For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours now and forever."

The kind of peace we pray for in the Mass becomes clear in the next petition:

"Lord Jesus Christ, who said to your Apostles, Peace I leave you, my peace I give you, look not on our sins, but on the faith of your Church, and graciously grant her peace and unity in accordance with your will. Who live and reign forever and ever. Amen"

The world seeks a peace that is based on power, success, on everything going well, on avoiding problems and suffering. To base one's life on such a fragile and fleeting kind of peace will not bring us real lasting peace at all.

The peace of Christ is Christ himself. Peace is not the absence of disappointments, trials and sufferings; it is the presence of

Christ in our life. This peace is now given to us freely. We should open our hearts to it and make this a real encounter with Jesus Christ.

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

And with your spirit.

Let us offer each other the sign of peace.

The sign of peace is a sacred action rather than just a sign of fellowship. It primarily expresses our unity in Christ and our desire to experience his peace and communion together.

"Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us grant us peace."

We repeatedly proclaim Jesus as the "Lamb of God", echoing the cry of John the Baptist when he saw Jesus approaching, "Behold, the Lamb of God!" The New Testament reveals Jesus as the new Passover lamb who offers his life as a sacrifice for our sins.

While we sing the "Lamb of God", the priest performs two rituals that may not be obvious to us from where we are standing – the breaking of the bread and the mingling of the Body and Blood of Christ.

At the Last Supper, Jesus took the bread, blessed it, broke it and gave it to His disciples. The "breaking of bread" now symbolises the unity of Christians when we partake of the one Body of Christ: "The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ? Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread " (1 Cor 10:16-17).

The priest then places a small fragment of the host – the Body of Christ – into the chalice while quietly saying, "May this mingling of the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ bring eternal life to us who receive it." This mingling of the two symbolizes the unity of the Body and Blood of Christ in every drop and every fragment. When we receive either species, we receive the body and blood, soul and divinity of Christ.

"Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world, Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb"

"Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under our roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed."

Indeed, how can we mere human beings dare to approach God in this manner? God is the Creator and we are his creatures. God is holy and we are sinners. So like the centurion in the Gospel, we kneel and acknowledge our complete unworthiness to receive our Lord. But at the same time, we demonstrate our faith and express our confidence that Jesus has the power to cure our spiritual and moral ills if we ask him to heal us.

Holy Communion should be the point within the Mass which finds us most attentive; it is the moment of a personal meeting with Jesus himself.

When we go forward to receive Holy Communion, we should do so in a dignified and reserved manner, contemplating the great moment that is about to take place. We should keep our focus on Jesus and prepare ourselves for an intimate encounter with Him.

We say Amen in response to "The Body of Christ" to declare our belief that Jesus Christ is truly present under the appearance of the bread that we receive. Our Amen is also our YES to Christ and to all who are joined to Him.

If we receive communion in the hand, we place one hand on the other to make a throne for the host to be placed in. After stepping to the side, we should pick up the host and consume immediately. If on the tongue, we should open our mouth and extend our tongue, allowing the host to be placed there before closing our mouth.

Jesus says : 'Abide in me, and I in you.' (Jn 15:4). We are now as close to Jesus as it is possible to be. We should intensify our prayer and pour out our heart to Jesus. Praise Him and thank Him for having joined Himself to us. When the thanksgiving hymn is sung, we should raise our voices joyfully.

The Communion Rite ends with a short prayer in which the priest prays for the spiritual fruits of the Eucharist to take effect in our lives.

The Mass is then closed with the priest blessing us in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

"Go forth, the Mass is ended."

Jesus told the disciples , "As the Father has sent me, even so I send you" (Jn 20.21) We are now dismissed with a mission. Our Lord has formed us through His Word, He has given us His Peace and He has nourished us with His Body and Blood. We are renewed and send forth to bring the joy of the gospel into the world. We are to serve Christ and to bear witness through our daily Christian living so that through us, all shall come to seek Him and have eternal life in our Lord ...JESUS CHRIST!