

<p style="text-align: center;">Catechetical – Doctrine of the Church</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Catechism of the Catholic Church reference to paragraph numbers</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Compendium To the CCC reference to Paragraph numbers</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">United States Catholic Catechism for Adults reference to pages</p>
<p>in personal conduct.</p> <p>By design, <u>this Catechism does not set out to provide the adaptation of doctrinal presentations and catechetical methods required by the differences of culture, age, spiritual maturity, and social and ecclesial condition</u> among all those to whom it is addressed. Such indispensable adaptations are the responsibility of particular catechisms and, even more, of those who instruct the faithful. Here the catechist must be able to make those adaptations to the culture and circumstances of those to be catechized. This means being a prayerful person oneself and being as conversant as possible with the prayer forms and styles of those one is teaching. The impression given in the <i>Catechism</i> could suggest that doctrine, creed and code come first to guide prayer as though it could be separated from them and each stand on its own. This would be a grave error: they actually circumincess, co-inhere, reciprocally exist in one another. The whole project of catechesis has to be prayer oriented.</p> <p>Prayer is an act of mind and will offered to God in adoration, thanksgiving, reparation and petition. It is our recognition of total dependence on God for existence and continuance in existence. It is founded on adoring God in and for himself. Hence the three later mentioned “ends” or purposes of prayer flow from and return to the adoration of God: thanksgiving recognizes that we are and have nothing apart from him; reparation that we have fallen from his expectation of us and express our sorrow and desire to return to his good graces; and petition adores God through our open-hearted acknowledgment that we can do nothing apart from him. The</p>	<p>#s 2559 - 65</p>	<p># 534</p>	<p>Pgs. 467 – 68</p>

<p style="text-align: center;">Catechetical – Doctrine of the Church</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Catechism of the Catholic Church reference to paragraph numbers</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Compendium To the CCC reference to Paragraph numbers</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">United States Catholic Catechism for Adults reference to pages</p>
<p><i>Catechism</i> teaches: Christian prayer is a covenant relationship between God and man in Christ. It is the action of God and of man, springing forth from both the Holy Spirit and ourselves, wholly directed to the Father, in union with the human will of the Son of God made man.</p> <p>The Catechism offers in its Chapter One a lengthy history of prayer from the Old through the New Testaments and in the prayer life of the Church. The focus the reader must give to this material is to concentrate on the examples of prayer reflected through central characters (particularly in the Old Testament): Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, David and Elijah, etc. The <i>Catechism</i> does not intend to be exegetical in this section, hence the moral problems that arise, like Abraham’s intention to sacrifice his only son Isaac, are not treated (though the catechist ought to be ready to deal with it if and when it arises for discussion). The <i>Catechism’s</i> intention is expository: showing that only the best is to be offered to God (as with Abel Gn. 4:1-8, compare with Heb. 11:4); that to live is to “walk with God” as Enoch did (Gn. 5:24); and God being pleased with the sacrifice of Noah (Gn. 8:20-9:17). These offer some of the universal characteristics of prayer shared by all. It is only with Abraham, however, that the prayer enlivened by faith begin (recall the first Eucharistic prayer at Mass “Look with favor on these offerings and accept them as once you accepted the gifts of your servant Abel, the sacrifice of Abraham <u>our father in faith</u>, and the bread and wine offered by your priest Melchisedech”). A Faith, however, that has to be purified as in the case of Abraham’s attempted sacrifice</p>	<p># 2564</p> <p>#s 2566 – 2649 (pgs. 616-636)</p> <p>#s 2569 -73</p>	<p># 535</p> <p>#s 535 -47</p> <p># 535</p> <p># 536</p>	<p>Pgs. 464 - 65</p>

<p style="text-align: center;">Catechetical – Doctrine of the Church</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Catechism of the Catholic Church reference to paragraph numbers</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Compendium To the CCC reference to Paragraph numbers</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">United States Catholic Catechism for Adults reference to pages</p>
<p>of Isaac (Gn. 22: 1-19, compare with Heb. 11: 17-19) makes clear (in the Old Testament, this scene is actually a polemic against human sacrifice, but that is an exegetical point the <i>Catechism</i> is not concerned with here. If Genesis and Hebrews are read together, we have another example of the <i>Catechism's</i> intent to read the Old Testament in light of its fulfillment in Jesus).</p> <p>The <i>Catechism's</i> description moves to the figure of <u>Moses</u> and introduces the notion of mediatorship (intercessory prayer for others) inaugurated in Exodus 3:1-15, and exemplified in Exodus 32: 11-14, 30-35; 33: 12-17. The mediatorship of Moses is fulfilled in Jesus (1 Timothy 2: 5-6), and reflected in our prayer for one another. Through <u>David's</u> intention and Solomon's building of the Temple (see his prayer of dedication 1 Kings 8: 10-61) a further focus for prayer enters, that of being in the presence of God, and God's presence to his people. Here, too, the shadow is perfected in the reality of Jesus the replacement of the Temple (see John 2: 19-22), and, again, reflected in us at prayer (wherever we are, or whatever we do is place for and potentially an act of prayer) as we are the temples of God's presence (see 1 Corinthians 6:19; 2 Corinthians 6: 16; Romans 8: 26 where the Spirit of God, dwelling within us urges in prayer what we need even when we do not know what we need).</p> <p>The <u>Prophets</u> all offer an example of personal growth in their dialogue with God, teaching, again, the importance of an on-going conversation with the Beloved if</p>	<p>Recall # 134</p> <p>#s 2574 -77</p> <p>#s 2578 - 80</p> <p>#s 2582 -84</p>	<p># 537</p> <p># 538</p> <p># 539</p>	

<p align="center">Catechetical – Doctrine of the Church</p>	<p align="center">Catechism of the Catholic Church reference to paragraph numbers</p>	<p align="center">Compendium To the CCC reference to Paragraph numbers</p>	<p align="center">United States Catholic Catechism for Adults reference to pages</p>
<p>“Sacrifice or oblation you wished not, but a body you have fashioned for me....then I said, just as I was commanded in the book. ‘Here I am, I have come to do your will.’” Throughout the New Testament Jesus is presented at prayer, and the spirit of that prayer is “not my will, but your will be done” (Mt. 29:39).</p> <p>Our first quest is to discover how Jesus prayed. Clearly his human mind and heart developed in an atmosphere of prayer and fulfillment of the required ritual of Judaism: he was circumcised the eighth day (Lk. 2:21) and presented in the Temple as required by Mosaic Law (Lk. 2: 22-38; at twelve years of age he went to Jerusalem for Passover (Lk. 2:41-50) and Mary, who surely saw to the development of his prayer life and exemplified it for him is seen in prayer with the nascent Church awaiting the Spirit at the first Pentecost (Acts 1:14). Jesus learned and prayed in the words and rhythms of his People, even in death on the Cross the Psalms were the staple of his prayer (Mk. 15:34. He prayed before important turning points in his life and that of his disciples. He sought out places of quiet where he could pray without distraction. We are introduced to the content of his prayer: it is always addressed to the Father and begins with words of thanksgiving (Mt. 11:25-27); he asked favors, but always with submission to the Father’s will (Mt. 26: 36-46); even from the Cross he prayed that the guilt of those who were killing him be forgiven (Lk. 23: 34); that the Father receive his spirit (Lk. 23: 46). His prayer was frequently petition: at the raising of Lazarus he</p>	<p>#s 2598 - 2606</p> <p># 2600</p> <p>#s 2601 -02</p> <p># 2603</p> <p># 2604</p>	<p># 542</p> <p>#s 543 – 44 Recall # 541</p> <p>#s 543 – 44</p> <p># 544</p>	

<p style="text-align: center;">Catechetical – Doctrine of the Church</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Catechism of the Catholic Church reference to paragraph numbers</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Compendium To the CCC reference to Paragraph numbers</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">United States Catholic Catechism for Adults reference to pages</p>
<p>prayed: “thank you Father for having heard me, yet I know indeed that you always hear me” (Jn. 11: 42). The prayer often called his “Priestly prayer” (Jn. 17: 1-26) is the finest example of Jesus at prayer, and it is patterned on or is the pattern for the prayer Jesus taught us, the “Our Father”.</p>	<p>Analyzed in #s 2746- 51</p>		
<p><u>Jesus teaches us how to pray:</u> by the example of his will which is always in conformity with the Father’s. For us that means conversion: a turning to the Father and turning away from sin; for it is not the repetition of “Lord, Lord” that bring salvation, but doing the Father’s will that opens us to him. Through the <i>parables</i> (the importunate friend of Lk. 11: 5-13; the insistent widow of Lk. 18: 1-8; and the contrast between the Pharisee and the tax collector of Lk. 18: 9-14) we learn to pray urgently, insistently and humbly.</p>	<p>#s 2607 – 15 #s 2608 – 09 #s 2610 -11 #2613</p>	<p>#s 544 – 45</p>	
<p><u>Mary</u>, too, is an example in prayer and intercessory power through whom our prayer receives irresistible power before God.</p>	<p>#s 2617 – 19</p>	<p>#s 546 -47</p>	<p>Pgs. 470 – 72</p>
<p><u>The Church and prayer</u> – There is an expression <i>ex opere operantis ecclesiae</i> (loosely translated ‘effective through the power of prayer of the whole Church’) which assures us that since one of the <u>marks</u> of the Church is its “Holiness” (holy in its Founder, its Sacraments, its teaching, its sanctified members who are the Saints in Heaven and the Holy Souls in Purgatory as well as the many saintly people among us) the Church’s Blessings, Sacramentals, Liturgy and para-liturgical ceremonies,</p>	<p>#s 2326 -60 #s 2626 – 43</p>	<p>#s 548 – 56 # 550</p>	<p>Pg. 467</p>

<p style="text-align: center;">Catechetical – Doctrine of the Church</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Catechism of the Catholic Church reference to paragraph numbers</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Compendium To the CCC reference to Paragraph numbers</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">United States Catholic Catechism for Adults reference to pages</p>
<p>and its official formulary prayers, support and surround our own personal prayers and impart a unique effectiveness to them.</p> <p><u>Prayer of Petition and Intercession:</u> The prayer of petition acknowledges that we do not control the adversities that enter our lives or the lives of those whom we love. In petition we turn to God as we acknowledge our dependence on him. Petition always begins with a spirit of reparation since we know ourselves to be sinners and totally reliant on God’s infinite goodness and graciousness toward us. Our request to be forgiven may be unexpressed but it is always there. In that spirit we present our every need to God: the coming of his kingdom, the justice and peace we need on every level of society, and the requests we and those who have asked our prayers desire.</p> <p>In the introductory verses to his giving us the “Our Father” Jesus reminds us “your Father knows what you need before you ask him” (Mt. 6:7-9). <i>Why, then, petitionary prayer?</i> The Catechism hints at this question but does not answer it directly. Here we attempt some answers: The <i>first</i> answer is, of course, Jesus own teaching in the “Our Father” where the last four petitions direct that we ask for “bread” (eschatological in Matthew and daily in Luke see our commentary to follow), forgiveness according to our own willingness to forgive, power to resist temptations that would exceed our own ability, and final deliverance from ultimate evil. Jesus goes further advising us: “ask and you will receive...”(Mt. 7:7); and “whatever you ask</p>	<p>#s 2629 – 36</p> <p># 2631</p> <p># 2632; 2647 – 48</p>	<p>#s 553 – 54</p> <p>Ref. # 545</p>	<p>Pgs. 468</p>

<p align="center">Catechetical – Doctrine of the Church</p>	<p align="center">Catechism of the Catholic Church reference to paragraph numbers</p>	<p align="center">Compendium To the CCC reference to Paragraph numbers</p>	<p align="center">United States Catholic Catechism for Adults reference to pages</p>
<p>for in prayer, believe, and you will receive” (Mt. 21:22); and again, “Whatever you ask for in my name, I will do” (Jn. 14:13). Jesus emphasizes this telling us “to pray continually and never lose heart” (Lk. 18:1). A <i>second</i> answer to our petitioning for what we need is suggested by the invitation Jesus gives us to “ask in his name”. Petitionary prayer gives us the opportunity to hear what we are praying for and to ask the question – is this something I can honestly ask in Jesus name? <i>Finally</i>, St. Thomas Aquinas answers that while God does not need to be told what we need and that we cannot change what he has decided, there are, nevertheless, things that God wills to bring about by means of our prayer. Recall Jesus’ words to the woman at the well: “If only you knew what God is offering....you would have been the one to ask, and he would have given you living water” (Jn. 4:10).</p> <p><u>How shall we pray?</u> All prayer is Trinitarian, for God is one. To pray to the Father is to pray at the same time to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. When we orient our prayer to one or another of the divine Persons in the Trinity it is not that we exclude the others; rather it is to address a need in ourselves, our lives and circumstances. The opening prayer of Mass a paradigm: it is addressed to the Father, but after the articulation of what it is the Church in her liturgy perceives as the need of the moment, the prayer always ends “through your Son, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God forever and ever. Amen.” Likewise, conscious of our faults and weaknesses, insecure with regard to</p>	<p><i>Summa Theologiae</i>, IIaIIae, Quo. 83: 2</p> <p>#s 2663 – 72</p> <p>#s 2673 – 75</p>	<p>#s 557 -77</p>	<p>Pgs. 468 - 69</p>

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<p>the purity of our motivations, and uncertain of the appropriateness of our request, we are encouraged to enlist the intercession of Mary, the Saints, Angels and Souls in purgatory whose vision can encompass, dispassionately and clearly the worthiness of our desires and intercede for us. Intercession through another is a common experience as we frequently request people to pray for us and our intentions. Indeed it is often of great value to pray with other people, as well as to pray alone; to pray in some private place or in a place designated for that purpose. All of these are aids to prayer.</p> <p>There are some difficulties in praying that arise from erroneous notions of what prayer is and what is intended in prayer; from a host of distractions at prayer and from coolness in regard to the habit of prayer. Here the <i>Catechism</i> itself should be consulted for discussion of these and their remedies.</p> <p><u>Expressions of Prayer:</u> - <i>Vocal prayer</i> is, probably, the most frequent form of prayer, and the way most of us are introduced to praying. We memorize ‘formula prayers’. There is great value in this because it engages our total self, and opens us to sharing the prayer experience with others, even a large community of persons. It has its drawbacks, however. Since we are not the authors of the words being said, it is easy to fall into routine and to say the words mechanically and thoughtlessly. This difficulty is not restricted to vocal prayer, but may be most evident there. It is overcome by attending</p>	<p>#s 2683 – 84</p> <p>#s 2685 - 90</p> <p>#s 2725 – 45</p> <p>#s 2700 – 19 #s 2700 – 04</p>	<p># 562 – 63; 564 – 66</p> <p>#s 572 – 74</p> <p># 569</p>	<p>Pgs. 470 – 72</p> <p>Pg. 472</p> <p>Pg. 473</p>

<p align="center">Catechetical – Doctrine of the Church</p>	<p align="center">Catechism of the Catholic Church reference to paragraph numbers</p>	<p align="center">Compendium To the CCC reference to Paragraph numbers</p>	<p align="center">United States Catholic Catechism for Adults reference to pages</p>
<p>to what is being said and making a conscious effort to mean what the words are saying. Distraction, routine and dryness can be overcome by an effort to think through and attend to what we are doing when we pray.</p>	<p>#s 2729 - 33</p>		
<p><i>Meditation</i> is another form of prayer. It is a quest of the mind seeking to penetrate more deeply and to understand more clearly one or another of the mysteries of revelation. There are many methods of meditation and many aids to the practice of meditation that can be helpful in developing this form of prayer.</p>	<p>#s 2705 – 08</p>	<p># 570</p>	<p>Pg. 473 – 74</p>
<p><i>Contemplative prayer</i> may be the least familiar to most of us, but it is a possible form of prayer and all of us are called to it, not only the great saints who have become noted for their powers of contemplation. St. Teresa of Avila likens it to the close and intimate knowledge friends share with one another. Here, of course, the friend is God, and contemplative prayer is aided by His desire for loving union with us. Contemplative prayer is, therefore, a gift of grace; and while it does not preclude ideas and concepts (for that is how we human beings operate) it consists more in <i>listening</i> to and <i>envisioning</i> God through Scripture, liturgy, doctrinal teaching and formula prayers. St. Teresa’s analogy to human friendship may help: it is like listening <i>beyond</i> words, seeing <i>beyond</i> the physically visible into the depth of the person loved. If it is difficult, what would make it so? Probably our failure to allow divine friendship to mature.</p>	<p>#s 2709 -19</p>	<p># 571</p>	<p>Pg. 474</p> <p>Pgs. 481 -95</p>

<p style="text-align: center;">Catechetical – Doctrine of the Church</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Catechism of the Catholic Church reference to paragraph numbers</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Compendium To the CCC reference to Paragraph numbers</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">United States Catholic Catechism for Adults reference to pages</p>
<p><i>Section Two—The Lord’s Prayer</i></p> <p>The <i>Catechism of the Catholic Church</i> concludes with a meditation of the “Our Father”. Again, refer to Pope Benedict XVI <i>Jesus of Nazareth</i>, Doubleday, 2007, chapter five, pgs. 128 – 168 for a very insightful and rewarding meditation on this prayer. The commentary on the Lord’s Prayer offered here has been divided into three parts, each with sub-parts to invite prayerful meditation and to see how this prayer reviews the doctrine in the first three parts of the <i>Catechism</i>.</p> <p>The Lord’s Prayer as Summary of Christian Living – here we meditate on its implications in our own lives.</p> <p>Part I the introduction and petitions that have God as directly addressed</p> <p>I – “Our <u>Father</u>” there it no evidence that Jesus ever said this prayer Himself, only that He composed it in response to a request and as model for our prayer, as Luke says. Implication: Jesus’ relationship to the Father is unique in a way that cannot be shared by any others. This is the mystery of the <i>Incarnation</i> the Son of God became man in all things except sin. The motivation for this fact is God’s gratuitous love for us that makes us the sole beneficiaries of His goodness. Since Jesus is one Person in two natures: divine and human, His actions are infallibly effective. He makes us sons and daughters of the Father. Since His unique relationship to God cannot be duplicated, our incorporation into the family of God is by adoption. This gives us</p>	<p>#s 2759 – 2865 (see above. Pgs. 215 -217)</p> <p>#s 2759 – 72</p> <p>#s 2777 – 93</p>	<p>#s 578 – 98</p> <p>#s 579 – 81; 587</p> <p>#s 582 -85</p>	<p>The introductory essay reviews much of the doctrine on prayer: Jesus as example, purity of intention, confidence and love. This on pgs. 481 -82</p> <p>Pgs. 483 – 85</p>

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<p>gives us the privilege of speaking to God and calling Him Father in a truly proper sense; we participate through grace in His divine life and therefore we are no longer mere creatures but truly live on a supernatural plain.</p> <p>“<u>Our</u>” is not a ‘possessive’ adjective, but a relational one. It describes a relationship we now have in grace and could not have from merely being created. God again takes the initiative and invites us into the dynamic life that is the Trinity (God is essentially relational). This relationship into which we are invited establishes a bond with God and through this a bond with each other. The “our” of this title, like the “us” of the last four petitions of this prayer <i>excludes</i> no one. If we are to say this prayer truthfully we must strive to overcome all prejudice, hatred, division, animosity and any other asocial or antisocial attitude or action.</p> <p>II – “Who art <u>in heaven</u>” – heaven here is not a place but a state of existence. If our life is a journey to heaven (End directed ‘teleology’) to speak of God in heaven is to speak of His majesty and completeness and possession of Him as the end or goal of our lives. It is to participate in His life at His choosing. An attribute of God is His <i>omnipresence</i>. He is everywhere. Hence, heaven is where God is and He indwells in us when we are in the state of grace. We are, then, praying to God Who is in us, around us, above and below us – in other words, we are praying not to a God at a distance but to God Who holds us together and keeps us in existence in His loving embrace.</p> <p>Implication: nothing about us is unknown to</p>	<p>#s 2794 – 96</p>	<p># 586</p>	<p>Pg. 485</p>

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<p>God; hence we are called to live completely in His presence and with His strength.</p> <p><u>III – “Hallowed be Thy name”</u> – To “hallow” something is to make it <i>holy</i>. We do not pray that God be made Holy. He is already HOLY. We pray that God’s holiness, completeness, and majesty be recognized and treated in a holy, respectful manner by us and through us by all whom we can influence. It is more a statement of self-dedication to the honoring of God’s name (in theological and in Scriptural terms, name stands for the persons, therefore we are committing ourselves to being agents of God’s being honored, which means we are first to honor Him).</p> <p>N.B. this is the first ‘petition’ in the prayer. As a petition it asks (or states our intention) that we live in such a way that we recognize God’s holiness and avoid anything (sin, even voluntary imperfections) that would contradict it. Implicitly we are asking that God draw us into His plan of making His holiness known, accepted and respected wherever we can be effective by example and positive witness. This <i>witness</i> is what the Sacrament of Confirmation is all about.</p> <p>Implications: if we are made in the image-likeness of God, we are obligated to holiness ourselves.</p> <p>What is holiness?</p> <p>Holiness is wholeness. To be holy is to be all that we can be, both in the sphere of natural talent and supernatural calling: to realize every talent with which we were born, to use every opportunity given us to actualize our potential, to express our gratitude for every advantage by never wasting it or misusing it (and when these advantages are other people</p>	<p>#s #s 2807 – 15</p>	<p>#s 588 -89</p>	<p>Pgs. 485 -86</p>

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<p>in our lives never to abuse their personal dignity or betray their trust). The greatest gift is Jesus – hence we determine to use every means to make our <i>faith</i>, His gift, a living reality in life: continuing to grow in the knowledge of that faith, to make the Eucharist central in our devotional life, to be conscious of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit and sensitive to the Spirit’s urgings to deeper faith and greater integrity of life.</p> <p><u>IV – “Thy Kingdom come” --</u></p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">The Kingdom is actually the “reign” of God or submission of all creation to the Creator. That is a project that is ongoing, begun with Christ and continues through our privileged mission to be in the world as agents for its accomplishment.</p> <p>Implications – may be uncomfortable:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ It means to be counter-cultural where the ‘world spirit’ is in contradiction to the teachings of Christ. ■ It means religion is not a private matter, but a life lived in the public square where it is required to exemplify moral principle when the world’s actions are tainted. ■ It means to practice what adherence to Catholicism demands: professionally, politically, personally. <p>God’s “Kingdom” is already here, but not yet completed and it is up to those who sincerely pray this prayer to contribute to its completion.</p>	<p>#s 2816 – 21</p>	<p># 590</p>	<p>Pg. 486</p>

<p style="text-align: center;">Catechetical – Doctrine of the Church</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Catechism of the Catholic Church reference to paragraph numbers</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Compendium To the CCC reference to Paragraph numbers</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">United States Catholic Catechism for Adults reference to pages</p>
<p><u>V – “Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven” –</u></p> <p>The proper object of the will is the good (at least that which is perceived as good). In heaven, all freely choose the Good that is God, the will embraces what is directly perceived as The Good. On earth, whatever we choose, we choose under the <i>aspect</i> of its seeming to be good (if it is objectively evil, sinful, wrong, it appears to be good or the ‘good thing to be done’ at the moment in which I choose it, or at least not as ‘bad’ as the alternative of not choosing it). E.G.: Lying – I know it is wrong and wish I had another way out, but here and now it gets me out of an embarrassing or serious situation. I lie because it appears that avoiding the undesired consequences of the truth seems ‘good’. (Only an intrinsically evil or unbalanced person lies for the sake of lying.)</p> <p>Implications: this petition about God’s will being done asks that the whole human environment (me and at least all others I can influence) will strive to form a right conscience and it asks for the strength to be faithful to that conscience for the rest of my life. This may subject me to: ridicule, rejection, being passed over for advancement for not ‘playing the game’, loss of ‘friends,’ failure to realize some dreams, etc. But I realize that the fundamental issue is: personal integrity (which is inseparable from being the image-likeness of God I was created to be) is more valuable than any of the passing goods or temporal advantages this world can offer.</p>	<p>#s 2822 – 27</p>	<p># 591</p>	<p>Pgs. 486 -87</p>

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<p>The aids to forming a right conscience are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Jesus’ teaching as mediated through the Scriptures as read and interpreted by the Church ■ Knowledge of the Church’s magisterial teaching ■ Prayer and fidelity to religious obligations ■ Seeking out prudent and knowledgeable advice when perplexed <p>The Lord’s Prayer Part II</p> <p>I - <u>Give us this day our daily bread:</u></p> <p>In Luke this Petition reads “Give us each day our daily bread” (11:3). The difference is in the use of the verbs. Where Matthew has a Greek aorist the request is a once-for-all asking for the eschatological bread, the bread of “eternal life” into which all else is subsumed. In Luke the verb is in the present tense. The eschatological moment yields to present need, but for the same purpose that in each present moment we live so as to be worthy of the eternal life that God has in store for us.</p> <p>This request reminds us of our total dependence on God, Who is “our Father.” As the child is sustained in his/her needs, at a time when self-sufficiency is not possible, the Father provides all we need. We do not have to ask, “for the Father already knows what we need” (Mt. 6:32). But we do ask because we need to be reminded of our dependence on God. We can be so arrogant that we think we can do it all alone. We easily forget our creaturely status and that our adopted</p>	<p>#s 2828 – 37</p>	<p>#s 592 – 93</p>	<p>Pg. 487</p>

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<p>son/daughter-ship is an entirely undeserved or gratuitous gift. To remind us of this is not to demean us; it is rather to make us face reality. I cannot attain the end, goal, purpose for which I have been created by any native power of mine. The purpose of my creation is to know, love and serve God in this life and to be happy with Him in heaven. I can do none of those things without God’s assistance. In fact, even on the natural level, I would not be able to continue in existence without the sustaining power of God. That is what it means to have been created: God brings me into existence and sustains me in existence. This fact may burst my bubble of pride, but it should return me to the truth that I exist only because of God’s love for me. That being true, there is nothing I can want or need that God will ever deny me as long as it contributes to the most important gift He has in store for me – eternal life.</p> <p>Note the “us” of this petition. It is a reminder of my bond with all others who, like me, are God’s sons and daughters. Since God is Father of every human being, there can be no human being whom I may properly use as an object, abuse for my pleasure, destroy for my convenience, neglect in his/her need for my own enrichment. The positive formulation that Jesus gave to what we often call the golden rule: “Do to others as you would have them do to you” (Mt. 7:12) is a fine commentary on this petition of the Our Father. It demands that we take the initiative to serve the needs of others whether or not our efforts and/or service are reciprocated. Jesus’ formulation goes far beyond that current in His day where it was negatively stated, “Do not do to others what you do not want others</p>			

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<p>to do to you.” This would be a far better world if that were the controlling rule of interpersonal action. But it is not enough for Jesus. He wants more: He demands initiative and giving without thought of return. Do the “good” because it is the right thing to do.</p> <p style="text-indent: 40px;">In the petition we ask for “our daily bread.” The Father is equally provident to us and to all of the human family. There are two truths being revealed in this petition: since we are asking God for what we need under the symbol of “bread” it should be clear that nothing really belongs to us as an absolute and exclusive possession. This means that with regard to literally everything we are stewards. Whatever gifts I have, whether spiritual, intellectual, material, personal, familial, social, religious, or any other that readily come to mind, they are a trust to be used wisely and with generous willingness to share them with others. Certainly, my real needs and responsibilities to those who depend on me are not to be neglected or jeopardized, but what is over and above (superfluous) may well obligate me to help the needy – as I can and to the degree that I can.</p> <p style="text-indent: 40px;">The Christian who prays this petition of the Lord’s Prayer cannot neglect the drama of hunger, homelessness, joblessness, medical neglect and so many other human tragedies that plague our world today. Consciously to blind oneself to these and still pray this prayer may be spiritually harmful. How can I ask God to do for me while I refuse to do for the neighbor when I can help my neighbor? The Beatitudes, especially “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness ...”</p>			

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<p>(Mt.5:6) fulfill the conditions for deserving to be given our “daily bread.” Recall the conclusion Jesus attaches to this Beatitude: “they shall be satisfied.”</p> <p><u>II - And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us:</u></p> <p>This has to be among the most challenging of the demands Jesus imposes on us and includes in the prayer He taught us to say. It warns us that our asking to be forgiven will not even be heard unless we are forgiving of those who have offended us. If our Baptism and Confirmation strengthen us to live a mature, adult Christian life, this petition gives us an instrument for self-reflection. The petition looks forward in our lives to on-going forgiveness as we continue our journey to eternity and for ultimate forgiveness at the time of death. But response on our part has to come first. Note the critical preposition as which joins unbreakably the two parts of the petition: forgive me as I forgive others.</p> <p>The order of the two parts of this petition is important. It is only when I am big enough to acknowledge that I am a sinner that I will even ask “forgiveness.” In Mark 2: 17 Jesus pointed out to critical Pharisees who complained that He ate with sinners: “It is not the healthy that need a physician, sick people do.” It is only they, the consciously sick and weak that are the ones likely to ask for help. Then, Jesus adds words that may well make us tremble: “I did not come to call the self-righteous, but sinners.” The self-righteous are never self-honest enough to confess their wrongdoing. They always have some excuse or explanation for their actions that releases</p>	<p>#s 2838 – 49</p>	<p>#s 494 -95</p>	<p>Pg. 488</p>

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<p>them from responsibility, or they proffer an excuse that lays blame on others. But if we can say that we own our actions and take responsibility for them, asking forgiveness when we are wrong, then we will be able to accept weakness in those who have wronged us and be willing to forgive when they acknowledge their evil and ask pardon. Our sins, after all, are offenses against God mediated through wrong actions done to another human being.</p> <p style="text-indent: 40px;">The as of this petition appears frequently in Jesus’ teaching and must, therefore, be important to Him. Consider these: “You must be perfected as your heavenly Father is perfect” (Mt. 5: 48). “Be merciful as your heavenly Father is merciful” (Lk.6: 36). “A new commandment I give you: love one another as I have loved you” (Jn.13: 34). Each of these statements of Jesus must tell us that being configured to the Father in our quest for perfection; and being merciful are the symbols of our created status. God created us in His own image-likeness, “male and female He created them in the image of Himself” (Genesis 1:26-27).</p> <p style="text-indent: 40px;">In this petition, Jesus did not advise us to do something He did not do Himself. His first words from the cross, after all of the lies spoken against Him, all of the hatred, suffering and indignity were: “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing” (Lk. 23:34). Lest anyone should protest, “well after all He is God and I’m not”, consider the example of the first Christian martyr, Stephen. As he is being stoned to death after a false trial, and lies told about him his last words resemble those of</p>			

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<p>Jesus: “Lord do not hold this sin against them” (Acts 7:59). This petition of the Our Father is not just a pious ideal, but a divine warning. In the parable of the unforgiving debtor, Jesus concludes that the servant who would not forgive is condemned and then adds: “And that is how my heavenly Father will deal with you unless you each forgive your neighbor from your heart” (Mt. 18:35). Notice, not just the words of forgiveness, but “from your heart.”</p> <p>The Lord’s Prayer Part III</p> <p>I - <u>And lead us not into temptation</u> –</p> <p>Obviously, God would never “lead” us “into temptation.” The Greek really means: “do not allow us to enter into temptation” or “to yield to temptation.” We are not praying as though asking that we never have temptation in our lives. That would be unrealistic. Even Jesus was tested as each of the Synoptic Gospels mentions, and the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews affirms: “...we have a (high priest) who has been tempted (tested) in every way that we are, though without sin” (4:15). In his epistle, James (1:13) affirms our judgment here, saying: “God...never tempts anyone.” Temptation is the price of our having free will. Free will includes, but is not limited to an ability to choose the better among goods; it also means the ability to select good over the evil we call sin. What we are praying for in this petition is sufficient strength that no temptation will so overwhelm us or prove so powerful that it succeeds in ensnaring us. We recognize our vulnerability and ask for the strength to conquer any temptation that comes</p>	<p>#s 2846 – 49</p>	<p># 596</p>	<p>Pg. 488 -89</p>

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<p>into our experience.</p> <p>C.S. Lewis, in his wonderful book <i>The Screwtape Letters</i>, offers a penetrating insight into the psychology of temptation. The older tempter, Screwtape, is counseling his nephew Wormwood, and warning him not to be blatant in his tempting. Play on the ‘client’s’ pride; make him/her look for excusing causes for doing wrong; remain so far in the background that the ‘client’ doubts the existence of a devil tempter or at least does not suspect the devil’s hand in what is happening at the moment. Lead the ‘client’ to moral minimalism where he/she will go to the brink of committing sin convinced that he/she could pull back at the last moment and not go the extra step to fall into sin. Make it seem a daring game, make the ‘client’ reason that “everyone is doing it, so why not?” Make the ‘client’ try to explain God’s commandment so that he/she will exaggerate and make it look ridiculous; then, reduced to ridicule, he/she will succumb. There is a lot of wisdom in Lewis’ analysis. Each of these tactics leading to trifling with temptation instead of the quick rejection Jesus shows by His action (see Mt. 4:10 “be gone Satan”) leads to ultimate fall.</p> <p>The Holy Spirit, dwelling in the grace-filled soul gives us the power of discernment to know which urgings we experience will lead to deeper spirituality and which are temptations that lead to spiritual death through the commission of sin. Therefore, we already have the power this petition prays for. The issue is whether we have the attention, intention and good will to allow the Holy Spirit to move us to the right moral decision. We need the Spirit’s help to distinguish</p>			

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<p><i>temptation from consent to temptation.</i> The first may well be an opportunity to grow spiritually by exercising the virtue that opposes the object of the temptation. We ought never to look for temptation or voluntarily put ourselves in a position to be tempted. That would be foolish, rash and presumptuous. But a temptation that enters our lives unbidden is a chance, through its defeat, to strengthen the virtue that opposes it (e.g., the virtue of chastity when the temptation is to sexual sin; truth when the temptation is to be dishonest to get out of some difficulty, etc.) It is only the power of discernment, the gift of the Holy Spirit that will unmask the evil temptation and reveal the way to conquer it. The attraction of temptation is precisely that: <u>attraction</u>. It looks good, feels good, promises immediate satisfaction; but when acceded to it, it diminishes us as persons. When temptations are acceded to frequently, the experience diminishes our sensitivity to the good, removes our sense of shame and so defeats us as to make it seem that we cannot resist. Vice, after all, is a habit, and habits are exceedingly difficult to overcome.</p> <p>II - <u>But deliver us from evil:</u></p> <p>This final petition is so important to Jesus that He made it part of His own “Priestly Prayer” said at the Last Supper on behalf of His disciples present with Him and future as history unfolds, that is you and me: “Father...I do not pray that You take them out of the world, but that You protect them from the evil one” (Jn. 17:15). Again the formulation of the petition is the plural “us,”</p>	<p>#s 2850 – 54</p>	<p># 597</p>	<p>Pg. 489</p>

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<p>but the petition also has a very personal dimension. In the drama of sin and death, we are individual contestants: <u>my</u> sin, <u>my</u> death. But this personal drama is played out with a whole cast of characters we call the Church or the Mystical Body of Christ. In the creed we name this the “Communion of Saints.” It is a great consolation to know that we are not in this project of salvation alone but have the Saints and the holy people with whom we share this pilgrimage, along with the Sacraments and holiness of the Church to be our companions and to assist us. But it is also a reminder of terrible responsibility. While the Church can never cease to be holy, it can be more or less holy depending on my being as holy as I should be. This is a motive to refrain from sin, as is the desire to be with our loved ones for all eternity a motive to live a virtuous and grace-filled life.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">The petition is not poetry or abstraction. The end of life is not some passive thing that happens to us. Whether death is the end of a long illness or occurs because we have lived to an old age, or comes suddenly as the result of violence, it is the last and most important moment of decision and choice we will ever make. It will authenticate a life of grace or cap a life of sin. The grace of God may grant a “deathbed conversion”, but it would be presumptuous for us to depend on that happening. At the moment of death, Satan has his last chance to throw himself across the path of our salvation and claim us for his diabolical reign. An interesting word “diabolic”, from the Greek <i>dia</i> across and <i>bolein</i> to cast. This petition confidently and at the direction of God’s own Son encourages us to remain faithful by</p>			

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<p>promising what is already given, divine assistance, provided we do not throw it away. It is the promise that we will be given the grace to vault any obstacle the devil may place before us: doubt, paralyzing fear, or any of the flood of emotional responses to the unknown that may distract us from the only really necessary intention of this moment, the response to God: “do with me as You will.”</p> <p>However death happens, whether slowly by aging or disease or quickly by accident or violence, it is something in which I actively participate. My death is the final and most important action of my life. It puts the final signature to my “book of my life” and describes what I have become and whom I am for all eternity. Every moment of life leads to this one dramatic moment and prepares me for it. This is why an active Sacramental life is so important and to be taken with such seriousness. Therefore, subsumed into this petition is the request to be strengthened against fear of the unknown, to be relieved of the anxieties that allow a flood of worries to distract us from the consoling truth of finally being taken into the loving embrace of Jesus Who said: “Do not let your hearts be troubled. Have faith in God and faith in me. In my Father’s house there are many dwelling places, otherwise how could I have told you I am going to prepare a place for you? I am going to prepare a place for you. Then I will come back and take you with me so that where I am you also may be” (Jn. 14:1-3). We never die alone. We die with Christ, Who died for us. In that sense, this petition is already answered. Nevertheless we ask for it both to bolster our confidence and to remind us to live in such a</p>			

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<p>way that every moment is preparation for the last, for one moment will be our last.</p> <p>The “Amen” that comes after the prayer is an expression that signifies our agreement with all that has preceded it. It is interesting to note that Jesus, in the Gospels where he is represented as using this word, always uses it at the beginning of a statement. The reason is that it implicitly calls upon God to witness the truth and sincerity of what has been said. At the beginning of the statement, Jesus is signaling that he is God and the statement to follow is true on his own say-so. After the prayer, when we say “amen” it is the equivalent of calling upon God to witness that what we have prayed we understand and accept, intend and determine to live by. Prayer is not something for us to engage in lightly. It is serious because it is conversation with God and is meant to reveal our love and commitment. The “amen” ratifies the content of our prayer, and God knows how serious we are in having spoken to him.</p>	<p># 2856</p>	<p># 598</p>	<p>Pg. 490</p>