



The Armor of Faith

Topic Summary: Prayer and the Holy Spirit Part IV Forms of Prayer



Praying Hands – Durer
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Introduction

[Greeting:] → Welcome to “The Armor of Faith,” a show where we hope to bring our listeners closer to the Word of God and the blessings we receive through living in the fullness of the Catholic faith. My name is Doug and I will be your host as we discuss the blessings of the Church Christ built upon Peter.

I am joined today by my panel: [names]

Our panelists provide support and catechesis for religious formation at St. Philip Benizi Catholic Mission in Cedaredge CO. Our panelists are also in the process of discernment and study as lay Dominicans who are also known as the Order of Preachers. So, welcome to our panelists as well as our listeners.

Let us open with a prayer:

Heavenly Father, we lift up our hearts in thanks and praise for this opportunity to open and share your Holy Word this day. We pray that You are with us and all our listeners as we share with one another the blessings of faith. We pray You will grant us wisdom and understanding as we seek to learn Your Holy Truth.

In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit we pray.

Discussion Opening: Last week we discussed the question of where we should pray. We discussed the opportunities for prayer in the house of God, with others, and by ourselves. Today, our discussion will concern the forms of prayer as taught by Jesus and reflected upon within the Catechism of the Catholic Church. As we discern the purpose of these various forms of prayer, the more complete we can make our prayer life. As we refine our approach to prayer, the more open we can make our hearts to God so that He may guide us and assist us with our discernment as to how we may lead our lives consistent with His desire for us. Let us consider the following article of the Catechism of the Catholic Church:

(CCC: 2559) “Prayer is the raising of one’s mind and heart to God or the requesting of good things from God.” But when we pray, do we speak from the height of our pride and will, or “out of the depths” of a humble and contrite heart? He who humbles himself will be exalted; humility is the foundation of prayer. Only when we humbly acknowledge that “we do not know how to pray as we ought,” are we ready to receive freely the gift of prayer. “Man is a beggar before God.”

(Question: So, keeping this in mind, let's discuss what are the forms of prayer open to us and how may we use them to “pray as we ought?”)

9 [Jesus said,] “This is how you are to pray:

Our Father in heaven,

hallowed be your name,

10 your kingdom come,

your will be done,

on earth as in heaven.

11 Give us today our daily bread;

12 and forgive us our debts,

as we forgive our debtors;

13 and do not subject us to the final test,

but deliver us from the evil one.

(Matthew 6:9-13)

(Observation: In the prayer we refer to as the “Our Father,” Jesus gave us a basic form of prayer with the following elements.

- Acknowledgment of our Father in heaven and His holiness
- Our submission to His will
- Our petition for our basic needs
- Our petition for forgiveness
- Our petition for protection

The Catechism of the Catholic Church outlines the following forms of prayer:

- Prayer of Petition
- Prayer of Intercession
- Prayer of Thanksgiving
- Prayer of Praise
- Blessing and Adoration

While we often look at the Lord's Prayer as the basic form of prayer, this is but one example of how Jesus taught us how to pray. To gain a full understanding of prayer, we must look to the full context of God's Word. Let's take a look at some of the articles of the Catechism of the Catholic Church as these forms are examined and explained.)

Petition: (CCC: 2632) Christian petition is centered on the desire and search for the Kingdom to come, in keeping with the teaching of Christ. There is a hierarchy in these petitions: we pray first for the Kingdom, then for what is necessary to welcome it and cooperate with its coming. This collaboration with the mission of Christ and the Holy Spirit, which is now that of the Church, is the object of the prayer of the apostolic community. ... By prayer every baptized person works for the coming of the Kingdom.

(Question: We often think of petition in the form of asking for our needs, which is often confused with our desires. In this article of the Catechism of the Catholic Church, we see that our petitions should be focused upon the coming kingdom. How might we compose our petitions such that they align with the coming of the Kingdom where love is shared by all?)

Intercession: (CCC: 2635) Since Abraham, intercession—asking on behalf of another—has been characteristic of a heart attuned to God’s mercy. In the age of the Church, Christian intercession participates in Christ’s, as an expression of the communion of saints. In intercession, he who prays looks “not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others,” even to the point of praying for those who do him harm.

(Question: Catholics are often criticized over intercessory prayer when we ask Mary, the angels, and saints to pray for us. We are told it is useless to pray to Mary or a saint when only God can answer our prayer. The main argument made is that there is but one mediator between mankind and our Heavenly Father, as stated in 1 Timothy 2:5-6, which reads, “For there is one God. There is also one mediator between God and the human race, Christ Jesus, himself human, who gave himself as ransom for all.” Another argument is that we are instructed according to John 14:16 that no one comes to the Father except through Jesus. John 14:16 reads, “Jesus said to him, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” Is it useless, then, to ask Mary, the angels, and the saints to pray for us? If not, why?)

When he took it, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb. Each of the elders held a harp and gold bowls filled with incense, which are the prayers of the holy ones. (Revelation 5:8)

3 Another angel came and stood at the altar, holding a gold censer. He was given a great quantity of incense to offer, along with the prayers of all the holy ones, on the gold altar that was before the throne. 4 The smoke of the incense along with the prayers of the holy ones went up before God from the hand of the angel. (Revelation 8:3-4)

But when the people cried out to Moses, he prayed to the Lord and the fire died out. (Numbers 11:2)

Then the people came to Moses and said, “We have sinned in complaining against the Lord and you. Pray to the Lord to take the serpents from us.” So Moses prayed for the people, (Numbers 21:7)

30 At the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage but are like the angels in heaven. 31 And concerning the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was said to

you by God, 32 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? **He is not the God of the dead but of the living.**"

(Matthew 22:30-32)

1 After six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. 2 And he was transfigured before them; his face shone like the sun and his clothes became white as light. 3 **And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, conversing with him.** (Matthew 17:1-3)

(Observation: We see in scripture where Moses interceded in prayer for the people and God answered that prayer. We also see that Moses and Elijah stood with Jesus conversing about the exodus Jesus would accomplish from Jerusalem (Luke 9:31). This observation of the presence of Moses and Elijah, many years after their passing from this world, is a demonstration that our Heavenly Father is truly the God of the living and not of the dead. Something to ponder, why would we believe that God would answer the prayer of Moses while Moses was on earth, but would not accept the prayers of Moses while in heaven?)

Thanksgiving: (CCC: 2638) As in the prayer of petition, **every event and need can become an offering of thanksgiving.** The letters of St. Paul often begin and end with thanksgiving, and the Lord Jesus is always present in it: **"Give thanks in all circumstances;** for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you"; "Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving."

(Question: Chances are, if we counted our prayers, our most common prayers are one of petition. **How might we go about changing that ratio?**)

11 As he continued his journey to Jerusalem, he traveled through Samaria and Galilee. 12 As he was entering a village, ten lepers met [him]. They stood at a distance from him 13 and raised their voice, saying, "Jesus, Master! Have pity on us!" 14 And when he saw them, he said, "Go show yourselves to the priests." As they were going they were cleansed. 15 **And one of them, realizing he had been healed, returned, glorifying God in a loud voice; 16 and he fell at the feet of Jesus and thanked him. He was a Samaritan.** 17 Jesus said in reply, "Ten were cleansed, were they not? **Where are the other nine? 18 Has none but this foreigner returned to give thanks to God?" 19 Then he said to him, "Stand up and go; your faith has saved you."** (Luke 17:11-19)

Praise: (CCC: 2639) **Praise is the form of prayer which recognizes most immediately that God is God.** It lauds God for his own sake and gives him glory, quite beyond what he does, but simply because he is. It shares in the blessed happiness of the pure of heart who love God in faith before seeing him in glory. By praise, the Spirit is joined to our spirits to bear witness that we are children of God, testifying to the only Son in whom we are adopted and by whom we glorify the Father. **Praise embraces the other forms of prayer and carries them toward him who is its source and goal: the "one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist."**

(Question: We often hear that phrase, "Let us lift up our hearts in thanks and praise to the Lord." **In what ways may we give praise?**)

Blessing: (CCC: 2626) Blessing expresses the basic movement of Christian prayer: it is an encounter between God and man. In blessing, God's gift and man's acceptance of it are united in dialogue with each other. **The prayer of blessing is man's response to God's gifts:** because God blesses, the human heart can in return bless the One who is the source of every blessing.

(Question: We often call upon our priests to bless us or various things. **Can we, as lay persons, offer prayers of blessing?)**

(CCC: 1669) Sacramentals derive from the baptismal priesthood: **every baptized person is called to be a "blessing," and to bless. Hence lay people may preside at certain blessings;** the more a blessing concerns ecclesial and sacramental life, the more is its administration reserved to the ordained ministry (bishops, priests, or deacons).

27 *"But to you who hear I say, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, 28 **bless those who curse you,** pray for those who mistreat you.* (Luke 6:27-28)

*Do not return evil for evil, or insult for insult; but, on the contrary, **a blessing,** because to this you were called, **that you might inherit a blessing.*** (1 Peter 3:9)

Adoration: (CCC: 2628) **Adoration is the first attitude of man acknowledging that he is a creature before his Creator.** It exalts the greatness of the Lord who made us and the almighty power of the Savior who sets us free from evil. Adoration is homage of the spirit to the "King of Glory," respectful silence in the presence of the "ever greater" God. Adoration of the thrice-holy and sovereign God of love blends with humility and gives assurance to our supplications.

(Question: Adoration is an opportunity to be in the presence of Christ in His house. **Why should we make time for adoration?)**

Some considerations for when we pray in Adoration:

- Offer thanks and praise
- Written prayers through which to focus thought
- Prayers from our heart
- Have a conversation
 - ➔ What are our concerns?
 - ➔ What are our plans?
 - ➔ What are our joys?
 - ➔ For what do we need forgiveness?
 - ➔ What does Jesus ask of us?

Quotes:

"Let us beseech the Lord to reawaken in us the joy at his presence and that we may once more adore him. Without adoration, there is no transformation of the world." (Pope Benedict XVI)

"A thousand years of enjoying human glory is not worth even an hour spent in sweetly communing with Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament." (Padre Pio)

"I encourage Christians regularly to visit Christ present in the Blessed Sacrament, for we are all called to abide in the presence of God. In contemplation, Christians will perceive ever more profoundly the mystery at the heart of Christian life." (Pope Saint John Paul II)

"Look upon the hour of adoration assigned to you as an hour in paradise. Go to your adoration as one would to heaven, to the divine banquet. You will then long for that hour and hail it with joy. Take delight in fostering a longing for it in your heart. Tell yourself, "In four hours, in two hours, in one hour, our Lord will give me an audience of grace and love. He has invited me; he is waiting for me; he is longing for me." (St. Peter Julian Eymard)

Final Thoughts: The more we seek to understand prayer, the greater the meaning it will have to our lives. Just as we communicate with one another through many forms, our prayer has different forms as well.

We improve the means by which we communicate through the feedback we receive. This might cause us to ask, what feedback do I receive to my prayer? If we are observant, we will see the feedback God gives. If we are not, we may be tempted to believe that prayer has no purpose. Of course, if we do not pray, it is the same as being silent. What feedback should we expect if we offer nothing?

Let us, then, reflect upon our prayer; its meaning, its purpose, and its blessings. Most importantly, let us take advantage of all the opportunities we have to lift up our hearts and voices to God.

Wrap Up: Well, our time has come to an end. We hope you will be able to join us next week as we pick up our discussion with the prayers of the Rosary.

Let us conclude with a prayer: Heavenly Father, we thank you for this opportunity to open and discuss Your Holy Word. We pray that as we go our separate ways, You will continue to walk with us and help us to see how we may put on the armor of **truth, righteousness, peace, faith, salvation**, and the **Word** of the gospel not only for the benefit of our lives, but also the lives of all who cross our path. In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, we pray. Amen.

Thank you all and God bless.

Next Session: Prayer and the Holy Spirit – Part V: Prayers of the Rosary