

Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time - Lectionary: 106

Reading 1 - [Wisdom 12:13, 16-19](#)

There is no god besides you who have the care of all, that you need show you have not unjustly condemned. For your might is the source of justice; your mastery over all things makes you lenient to all. For you show your might when the perfection of your power is disbelieved; and in those who know you, you rebuke temerity. But though you are master of might, you judge with clemency, and with much lenience you govern us; for power, whenever you will, attends you. And you taught your people, by these deeds, that those who are just must be kind; and you gave your children good ground for hope that you would permit repentance for their sins.

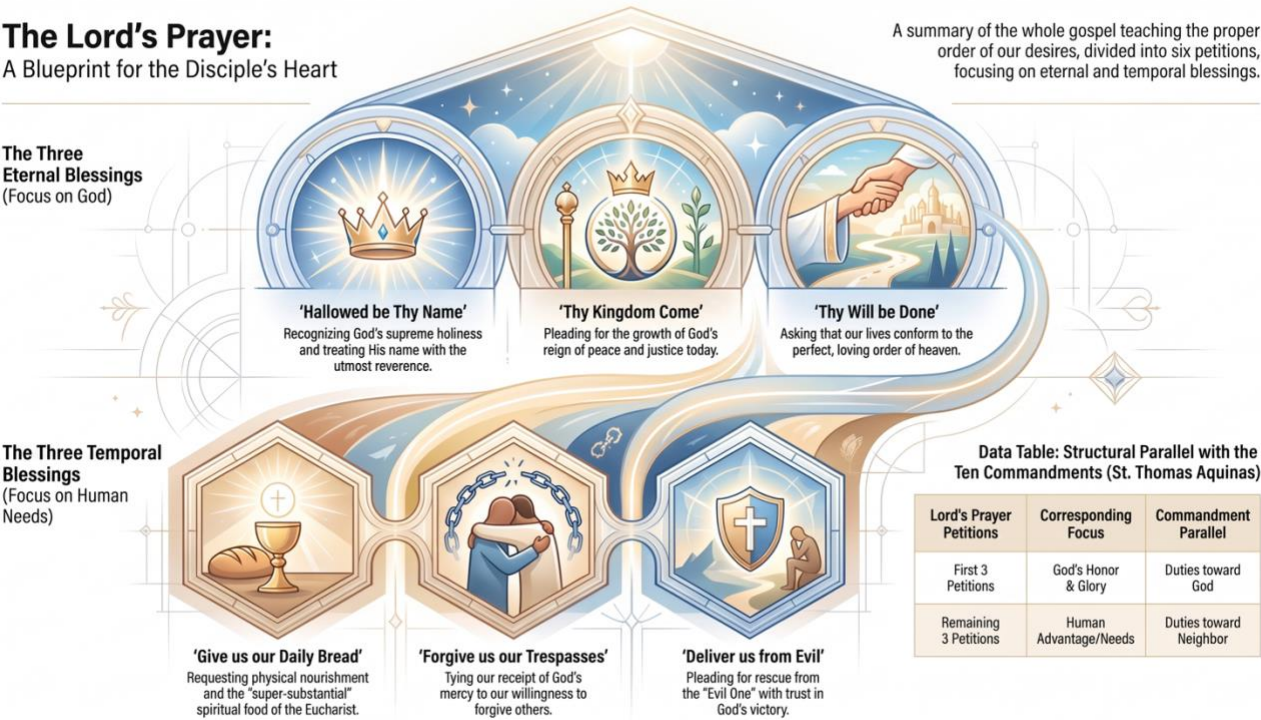
Responsorial Psalm - [Psalm 86:5-6, 9-10, 15-16](#) R. (5a) Lord, you are good and forgiving.

Reading 2 - [Romans 8:26-27](#)

Brothers and sisters: The Spirit comes to the aid of our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes with inexpressible groanings. And the one who searches hearts knows what is the intention of the Spirit, because he intercedes for the holy ones according to God's will.

Gospel - [Matthew 13:24-30](#)

Jesus proposed another parable to the crowds, saying: "The kingdom of heaven may be likened to a man who sowed good seed in his field. While everyone was asleep his enemy came and sowed weeds all through the wheat, and then went off. When the crop grew and bore fruit, the weeds appeared as well. The slaves of the householder came to him and said, 'Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? Where have the weeds come from?' He answered, 'An enemy has done this.' His slaves said to him, 'Do you want us to go and pull them up?' He replied, 'No, if you pull up the weeds you might uproot the wheat along with them. Let them grow together until harvest; then at harvest time I will say to the harvesters, "First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles for burning; but gather the wheat into my barn."'"



## Summary

This homily synthesizes theological insights and scriptural analysis regarding the Lord's Prayer and the nature of the Kingdom of Heaven, based on the liturgical readings for the 16th Sunday in Ordinary Time. The focus is that the Lord's Prayer—described by Tertullian as the "summary of the whole gospel"—provides the "trustworthy content" and spiritual logic necessary for Christian life. Fr. Blair outlines the structure of the prayer's seven petitions, divided into three eternal blessings focused on God's glory and four temporal blessings focused on human needs. It further examines the nature of the Kingdom of God as an "already but not yet" reality, characterized by the coexistence of good and evil (the wheat and the weeds) and the transformative power of grace. Key takeaways include the necessity of internalizing the prayer's priorities, the role of the Holy Spirit in interceding due to human weakness, and the call to missionary discipleship in building an authentically human society rooted in justice, peace, and love.

The Lord's Prayer is intended to be a "prayer of the heart" that shapes the mind and heart of every Christian. It is designed to transform an individualistic or private faith into a communal participation in God's Kingdom. To avoid the prayer becoming "just words falling off our lips," believers are encouraged to reflect on the "spiritual logic" of the petitions, ensuring their lives and communities bear fruit in accordance with the "perfect loving order" of heaven.

## The Lord's Prayer & The Kingdom Harvest

This weekend there is a strong, connection between the readings and the fundamental Christian prayer, the Lord's Prayer. And, if we're honest, too many of us pray the Lord's Prayer with little reflection or understanding. The following statements help us to recognize that it is in fact very important to more deeply consider the words of this prayer, although, that they are words of prayer given us by the Lord himself ought to be motivation enough! Tertullian, a 2<sup>nd</sup> / 3<sup>rd</sup> century theologian and apologist from Carthage in Africa, called the Lord's prayer, "*truly the summary of the whole gospel.*"<sup>1</sup> A millennium later, Thomas Aquinas added that when we recite the Lord's Prayer, "*we ask, not only for all the things we can rightly desire, but also in the sequence that they should be desired.*"<sup>2</sup> As well, he affirmed for us that in giving us this prayer, Jesus teaches the manner of praying, not that other prayers are forbidden—as long as the prayer is asking for the same things "in essence." Since, Aquinas continued, knowing "what to ask for" is difficult, Jesus gives us trustworthy content. Aquinas also taught that this primary prayer is a testament to our participation in the life of the Trinity: we are permitted to invoke God as "Father" because the Son of God has revealed the Father to us, and because through baptism, we have become sons of God. The wording "*Our Father*" stresses participation in the Church as the family of believers united around the heavenly Father.<sup>3</sup>

In fact, the readings this weekend don't merely fit the Lord's Prayer, they supply the content and spiritual logic behind its seven petitions; three that request eternal blessings and four requesting the temporal blessings necessary for attaining the eternal ones. The connection is strong in three ways:

- the readings tell us who God is (merciful Father),
- how Christian prayer succeeds (Spirit intercession),
- and what God's kingdom looks like in time (wheat and weeds growing together until God's harvest)

Pope Benedict XVI said; "*Each day, you and so many of your neighbors pray to the Father in the Lord's own words: 'Thy Kingdom come,' and then he taught that, 'This prayer needs to shape the mind and heart of*

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.documentacatholicaomnia.eu/03d/0160-0220\\_Tertullianus\\_De\\_Oratione\\_\[Schaff\]\\_EN.pdf](https://www.documentacatholicaomnia.eu/03d/0160-0220_Tertullianus_De_Oratione_[Schaff]_EN.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> *Summa theologiae* II-II, q. 83, a. 9) (CCC 2759–2865)

<sup>3</sup> Scott Hahn, ed., *Catholic Bible Dictionary* (New York; London; Toronto; Sydney; Auckland: Doubleday, 2009), 549–550.

every Christian. It needs to bear fruit in the way you lead your lives and in the way you build up your families and your communities."

"Our Father." Words that indicate the intimate relationship with God by which we say "Abba," in deep familial trust. In that spirit we pray the seven blessings, as St. Augustine called them. The eternal blessings begin in this world and grow as believers mature in grace, reaching their perfect state in the next life as permanent possessions, while the temporal blessings address the needs of present existence.<sup>4</sup> The first three petitions concern God's honor, while the remaining four concern human advantage—mirroring how the Ten Commandments divide into two tables, the first addressing duties to God and the second addressing duties to neighbors.<sup>5</sup>

The three petitions for eternal blessings focus on God's majesty and aim at glorifying God:

- **Hallowed be thy name:** Recognizing God's supreme holiness and sanctifies God's name in every heart; asking that His name be treated with the ultimate reverence it deserves.
- **Thy kingdom come:** Pleads for both the growth of God's kingdom in daily life and its final arrival; the arrival of God's reign of peace, love, and justice.
- **Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven:** Calls upon the Father to fulfill the plan of salvation in the world, asking that human societies and our personal lives conform to the perfect, loving order that already exists in heaven.

Jesus wants us to be renewed in (by the Spirit) and to continually renew our confidence (by our cooperation with the Spirit), in his Kingdom; its power for growth, its ability to withstand the attacks of enemies, and its capacity to transform lives, families, and communities. Christ inaugurated this kingdom on earth, gathering people around Himself: The Church is "*on earth the seed and beginning of that kingdom.*"<sup>6</sup> Christians must be without doubt that He came to establish the Kingdom of God, and initially made it present by His preaching, by His actions, in His whole person, and ultimately through His death and resurrection. As baptized Christians we know that we are members of that Kingdom, as members of his Mystical Body, the Church. We are beneficiaries of the Kingdom of God through grace because entry into the Kingdom and perseverance within, depend on God's merciful gift, which is received in faith and conversion, rather than on human achievement. Our lives and desires must be contextualized by this feature of our identity in Christ, as missionary disciples we are builders of His Kingdom. The Kingdom which is the kind of world that God, through Jesus and his brothers and sisters, wants to see realized among humanity on earth. We pray for it daily, "*Your Kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven...*" And it will only come about in so far as we co-operate and work together with Jesus, here and now.

The four petitions for temporal blessings center on our dependence on Him, requesting what is needed from the Father for our sustenance, forgiveness, and protection from evil.

- **Give us this day our daily bread:** Asks for the nourishment we need for body and soul. Specifically, the strong connection to the Eucharist, our 'supersubstantial bread'.
- **Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us:** Implores God's mercy for sins, acknowledging them and tying God's mercy directly to our willingness to extend that same grace and forgiveness to others.
- **Lead us not into temptation:** Asks God to lead us away from sin and pleads with God to give the strength to resist the interior and exterior forces that draw us away from Christ and into sin.

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<sup>4</sup> Augustine of Hippo, "[The Enchiridion](#)," in *St. Augustin: On the Holy Trinity, Doctrinal Treatises, Moral Treatises*, ed. Philip Schaff, trans. J. F. Shaw, A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, First Series (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Company, 1887), [3:274](#).

<sup>5</sup> John Maldonatus, *A Commentary on the Holy Gospels*, ed. and trans. George J. Davie, Catholic Standard Library (London: John Hodges, 1888), [195](#).

<sup>6</sup> Catechism of the Catholic Church, #541

- **Deliver us from evil:** Trusting in God's ultimate victory we plead for God to rescue us from the “Evil One” and his efforts to drag us away from the kingdom of heaven.

The Lord’s Prayer, structured by these two main movements that focus on God and on humanity, isn't just a set of words to recite, but is the definitive model for a missionary disciple's heart. It aligns our desires with God's will; it transforms individualistic faith to the communion of His kingdom. Throughout Christian history, saints and scholars have emphasized that praying this from the heart, from the depths of the reflective soul - it shapes the very core of our spiritual journey as we internalize the priorities of Jesus.

What exactly is the nature of this Kingdom of God on earth?<sup>7</sup> Although the Kingdom as it is in heaven, is not a place contained in time and space it is what defines the Kingdom on Earth which is contained in time and space. If we speak of the Kingdom using the Greek word, *basileia*, we can better understand the Kingdom as it is in heaven as ‘kingship’, or ‘reign’, or ‘rule’, so some translations speak of the ‘Reign of God’. The Kingdom is primarily an environment, a state of being in which a set of relationships and a situation where God’s will prevails perfectly. The Kingdom of God on earth then is identified by faith, hope, and love which give rise to and support the virtues of prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance; as seen fully modeled in the person of Christ. Kingdom people who manifest the Kingdom of God on earth do so, as disciples of Christ individually and as members of the Mystical Body of Christ, collectively, striving with the aid of grace and the work of the Holy Spirit, to live. They are united with the rule of God in trying to build a world we all creation longs for but cannot be fully realized on earth. It is very much something for the here and now. It is the ‘vocation’ of the Church, and therefore the vocation of every parish community and of every member of that community. Jesus establishes the Kingdom in a way that is both: historical / present (“already close and at work”), and eschatological (it reaches fullness at the completion of history).<sup>8</sup>

We believe, the Kingdom is meant to transform human relationships, growing as people learn to love, forgive, and serve one another, and as God’s saving plan is realized in full. That, Jesus establishes the Kingdom of God—made present in His person and mission, seeded in His Church, and brought to fullness in the end. We build this Kingdom even while the enemy strives to thwart us and destroy our efforts. In today’s Gospel reading we have three images or parables of the Kingdom at work among us. The first is the parable of the weeds among the wheat. This touches on deep areas in the lives of all of us. The parable is saying that the children of God must learn in the world and understand clearly how they are not of the world. The next two parables point to two other characteristics of the Kingdom. The parable of the mustard seed speaks to the tiny beginnings of the fledgling Church. In the third parable, the Kingdom is compared to a small amount of yeast in a large batch of dough. Its presence cannot be easily detected—for it is totally blended with and part of its environment—as a good Kingdom community should be. At the same time, it has an energy of its own which produces a remarkable influence of growth in the whole.

Put another way, each of the three parables is saying something specific about the development of God’s Kingdom among us: It is going to be, overall, a messy business in which the good and bad, the strong and the weak and the clean and the corrupt will rub shoulder to shoulder. No matter how small the beginnings, if we are faithful, we can be sure that apparently difficult obstacles, threats and even dangers can be overcome. A Kingdom-community, even though very small, can exert a real influence on the growth of the environment of which it is fully a part and be instrumental in spreading Kingdom values.

Christ came to establish a Kingdom, and he will come again at the end of time to bring his Kingdom to fulfillment. In the meantime, he taught us to pray every day for that which we will need as his builders.

<sup>7</sup> Vatican Council II. *Lumen Gentium*. Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1964.

<sup>8</sup> Pope John Paul II. *Redemptoris Missio*. Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1990.

This is going to involve living as God created to live the abundant life; a life of freedom and happiness, full of meaning, purpose, and wisdom. The life which we can only have through salvation in Christ, the one Savior. In the power of grace and the work of the Holy Spirit, a life of knowing, loving, and following him more each day. Jesus himself said this in the Gospel of John, *"I have come so that they may have life and have it to the full."*<sup>9</sup> St Paul understood this. He defined Christ's Kingdom like this: *"The kingdom of God is righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit"*.<sup>10</sup> That's the goal of Christ's Kingdom: experiencing life to the full, experiencing righteousness, peace, and joy by letting God's grace rule our thoughts and actions. It's a Kingdom that begins here on earth, in the Church, and will last through all eternity.

### Glossary of Key Terms

| Term                           | Definition                                                                                                                              |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Abba</b>                    | An Aramaic term for "Father" or "Daddy," expressing an intimate, familial relationship with God.                                        |
| <b>Basileia</b>                | A Greek word meaning "kingship," "reign," or "rule," used to describe the Kingdom of God as an environment where God's will prevails.   |
| <b>Deliverance</b>             | The act of being rescued from the "Evil One" and his efforts to draw believers away from the Kingdom.                                   |
| <b>Eschatological</b>          | Relating to the final stages of history or the ultimate fulfillment of God's plan at the end of time.                                   |
| <b>Eternal Blessings</b>       | The first three petitions of the Lord's Prayer that concern God's honor, majesty, and the arrival of His perfect reign.                 |
| <b>Hallowed</b>                | To be recognized as holy or treated with ultimate reverence; specifically applied to God's name.                                        |
| <b>Mystical Body</b>           | A theological term for the Church, signifying the collective union of baptized believers with Christ as their head.                     |
| <b>Super-substantial Bread</b> | A translation of the term for "daily bread" that emphasizes the spiritual and Eucharistic nature of the nourishment requested from God. |
| <b>Temporal Blessings</b>      | The final four petitions of the Lord's Prayer that address the practical and spiritual needs of present daily existence.                |
| <b>Tertullian</b>              | A 2nd-3rd century theologian and apologist who famously summarized the Lord's Prayer as the core of the Gospel message.                 |

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<sup>9</sup> John 10:10

<sup>10</sup> Romans 14:17