

The Year of Faith

Catechesis on the Mass

The Lord's Prayer

This week in our catechesis on the Mass, we begin the Communion Rite with the Lord's Prayer.

With Our Lord Jesus now truly present among us under the appearance of bread and wine, the Eucharistic Liturgy rapidly proceeds to the moment of Communion. The first stage of preparation is to pray to the Father in the very words which Jesus taught us. It is important to note that introduction which the priest gives ends with the words: "we dare to say." The only reason we have the audacity to utter these words to God the Father is because God the Son has told us to do so. We call God "our Father" because we have become adopted sons through Christ. We pray for the coming of God's Kingdom which is the end of the world as we know it. We pray that God's will is done and not our own. We ask for nothing more than our daily needs. We pray that our sins be forgiven, but only to the degree which we forgive others' sins. Finally, we ask not to be put to the test but rather to be delivered from evil. This last intention is expanded upon by the embolism which the priest adds alone. It would be insanely presumptuous to pray any of these things except for the fact that we belong to Christ and have handed our lives over to Him!

A note about posture during the Our Father: The *Roman Missal* only directs that the priest extends his hands for the Our Father and the embolism. Neither the deacon nor the people are instructed to extend their hands; in the context of the Mass the extending of hands is a gesture exclusive to the priest. Furthermore, nowhere is the holding of hands prescribed for any part of the Mass at any time; the focus of the Our Father is not horizontally directed to our neighbor but rather vertically to God the Father.

Next week, we cover the Prayer for Peace...

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