

Pastor's Message

After praying the Eucharistic prayer we are now ready to receive communion. This next part of our Mass is called the Communion Rite. It consists of 1) praying the Our Father, 2) offering the Sign of Peace, 3) the rite of the Breaking the Bread, 4) the singing of the Lamb of God, 5) Communion and the Communion Song. We will consider each of these parts of the Communion Rite separately and in some depth.

The Our Father has been handed down to us from two sources: Mt. 6:9-13 and Lk. 11:2-4. In the Mass we pray Matthew's version of the Lord's Prayer. So much has and can be said about this only prayer that Jesus taught us, his disciples. Often in these reflections I have indicated my disappointment with the "new" translation of the Mass texts. That is not the case with the final words that introduce and invite us to pray the Our Father. To begin the Communion Rite the presider says to the community: "At the Savior's command and formed by divine teaching, **we dare to say**". Then together we pray the Our Father, "We dare to say". Have you ever considered how daring it really is to call God, the creator and sustainer of the universe "Our Father"? Or how even more daring it is to use the word Jesus actually used when teaching us this prayer: "Abba" which literally translated means "Daddy" or "Papa" or "dada"? Jesus invites us to see God as a child sees her/his father. It takes an immense amount of daring to risk calling God "Daddy".

Then the prayer very simply and in very few words teaches us all we need to know to engage the spiritual life. We acknowledge who it really is with whom we speak: "Our Father who art in heaven" and we praise and give glory to his name: "hallowed be thy name". We pray that God's vision and dream for us and for the world will be made real: "thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." Next we make four requests of God. First, "Give us today our daily bread"; feed us what we need physically, emotionally, and spiritually today. Second, "forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us". We acknowledge our sin, our inability to live up to the way of life to which God has called us and we promise to forgive others who wound and offend us as God forgives. I hear this phrase as a challenge to understand that forgiveness is the only way we will heal others and ourselves. Third, "and lead us not into temptation", i.e., protect us from all the ways we can be lead off the path of righteousness and truth. Fourth, "but deliver us from evil" Evil is real. We can be deeply wounded by the malice of others and by the forces of the world. We need God's protection to save us.

This is a daring prayer to God. It demands to be sung beautifully or at least recited in a slow and meaningful way. Next time you pray the Our Father at Mass think of what we are really saying and see if it doesn't take real daring to ask this of God and to presume to call God "Our Father"!

Fr. Chris