

Congregation at Prayer

✠ Advent II ✠

A Guide for Daily Family Prayer
For the Week of December 9th to 15th

Catechesis Notes for the Week...

Prayer is the most natural thing in the world for a Christian. It's simply talking with God who is already talking to you. In fact, we learn to pray much the same way a child learns to speak—and once the art of speaking is learned (which comes gradually, of course), then the child just talks and talks and talks. So it is with the Christian.

When a baby is born there are no words exchanged. There are only words given. The mother and the father talk to the baby incessantly—they utter cute, baby-talk nonsense; they read stories; sing; laugh; they talk to the child as if he'd really respond. And that's precisely how the baby learns to speak. By hearing the words of his mother and father. He learns by repeating some of them back. At first, it's just noise—yelling or laughing or grunting. But then it becomes a “Mama,” or a “Dada.” Then comes “truck,” and “milk,” and “go fast.” Eventually, the child, now having mastered this speech thing, will talk all the way until he falls fast asleep, and start up again early the next morning.

Christians learn to pray the same way. Prayer is simply speaking back to our Heavenly Father. We are His dear children, and He is our true father. So it's quite natural that the first prayer we learn is the “Our Father,” kind of like learning to say “Dada.”

From this prayer, we learn to ask God for all things. We rely upon Him for every good gift of both body and soul. We ask for things we don't even particularly care much about—at least not yet—and we trust that He'll give all this to us by grace.

In this way His name is kept holy among us. By our trusting Him to provide, we cling to His word of promise and lead holy lives according to it. Everything depends on our Heavenly Father, giving to us according to His Word. Everything we ask is rooted in His Word—otherwise, like children, we'd never know how to ask in the first place, or even what we should ask. But as soon as we depart from God's Word, as the Catechism teaches, we profane the name of God among us. “*Protect us from this, heavenly Father!*” When we pray, we *ask, seek, and knock*, trusting Him to give all and more!

The Spirit Preaches Christ to You

Responsive Prayer 2, *Lutheran Service Book* p.285

Learn-By-Heart Scripture...

Matthew 7:7-8

⁷“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. ⁸For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened.”

Learn-By-Heart Catechism...

The Lord's Prayer

Introduction: Our Father who art in heaven.

What does this mean?

With these words God tenderly invites us to believe that He is our true Father and that we are His true children, so that with all boldness and confidence we may ask Him as dear children ask their dear father.

First Petition: Hallowed be Thy name.

What does this mean?

God's name is certainly holy in itself, but we pray in this petition that it may be kept holy among us also.

How is God's name kept holy?

God's name is kept holy when the Word of God is taught in its truth and purity, and we, as the children of God, also lead holy lives according to it. Help us to do this, dear Father in heaven! But anyone who teaches or lives contrary to God's Word profanes the name of God among us. Protect us from this, heavenly Father!

Daily Readings...

Monday (12/9): Isaiah 26:1-19; 1 John 3:1-24

Tuesday (12/10): Isaiah 26:20-27:13; 1 John 4:1-21

Wednesday (12/11): Isaiah 28:14-29; 1 John 5:1-21

Thursday (12/12): Isaiah 29:1-14; Jude 1-25

Friday (12/13): Isaiah 29:15-30:14; Revelation 1:1-20

Saturday (12/14): Isaiah 30:15-26; Revelation 2:1-29

Sunday (12/15): Isaiah 30:27-31:9; Revelation 3:1-22

Prayer of the Week...

Stir up our hearts, O Lord, to make ready the way of Your only-begotten Son, that by His coming we may be enabled to serve You with pure minds; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Psalm of the Week...

Psalm 105

Hymn of the Week... “On Jordan's Bank the Baptist's Cry”

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Looking Forward to Next Week...

Isaiah 35:1-10

James 5:7-11

Matthew 11:2-15