

## OUR DAILY BREAD

*[Italicized quotes – Pope Francis – General Audience on Mar. 27, 2019]*

In the second part of the “Lord’s Prayer,” we present our needs to God, starting with “our daily bread.” Our prayer stems from the realization that we are not self-sufficient beings – we need nourishment every day. The Gospels show that many people began their encounter with Jesus with a simple request – bread, healing, sight, purification. Jesus was never indifferent to these requests and the suffering from which they arose, and so he teaches us to ask the Father for the basics that we need, but lack.

*Christian prayer begins at this level. It is not an exercise for ascetics; it begins from reality, from the heart and from the flesh of people who live in need, or who share the condition of those who do not have life’s necessities. Not even the most exalted Christian mystics can overlook the simplicity of this request. “Father let there be the necessary bread for us and for all.” And “bread” also means water, medicine, home, work. ... Asking for life’s necessities.*

The bread a Christian prays for is not “mine,” but “ours” – we ask God on behalf of the world community, not just ourselves. We cannot go to our Father in need unless we go hand-in-hand with our brothers and sisters. If we were to steal from one another the bread he gives, how could we call ourselves his children?

*If one does not pray in this way, the “Our Father” ceases to be a Christian prayer. ... This prayer contains an attitude of empathy, an attitude of solidarity. In my hunger I feel the hunger of the multitudes, and thus I will pray to God until their request is answered. This is how Jesus teaches his community, his Church, to bring to God the needs of all: “We are all your children, O Father, have mercy on us!”*

The bread we pray for will fault us if we break it with only those close to us. It was bread given for mankind – love cannot bear it to be eaten by just one. Our love cannot bear it; nor can God’s love bear this selfishness of not sharing our bread.

Recall the time a great crowd gathered before Jesus; they were hungry. Jesus asked whether someone had something to eat, and only one boy offered to share the little he had: five loaves and two fish. Jesus multiplied his generosity and all ate to their fill. That boy understood the Our Father’s lesson: that food is not private property, but Providence to be shared, with the grace of God.

*The true miracle performed by Jesus that day is not so much the multiplication — which is true — but the sharing: give what you have and I will perform a miracle. He himself, in multiplying that given bread, revealed the offering of Himself in the Eucharistic Bread. Indeed, the Eucharist alone is capable of satisfying the infinite hunger and the desire for God which animates each person, even in the search for daily bread.*