

## SESSION 3 / GIVE US OUR DAILY BREAD

*And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus (Philippians 4:19)*

**Theme** The old dictum, *Deus Providebit* (God will provide) is borne from experience, not always obvious but nevertheless real. We then, having received, are asked to provide for others in need.

### **Welcome: We Pray and Share Together** (15 mins)

O God,  
send forth your Holy Spirit  
into our hearts that we might perceive,  
into our minds that we might remember,  
into our souls that we might meditate.  
Inspire us to speak with love, holiness,  
tenderness and mercy.  
Teach, guide and direct our thoughts and senses  
from beginning to end.  
May your grace help us to see with your eyes  
and to act with your love and light in our hearts.  
May we be strengthened with wisdom from on high  
for the sake and glory of your kingdom.  
Through Jesus Christ, our Lord.  
Amen.

In a period of calm and a space of trust, each one of us is invited to share briefly one thing that has happened in the past week. It could be one thing that has given you cause for concern, something shared during the last time you met as a group or something that has given you cause to celebrate.

In this moment of peace and fellowship, we pray for the good of the group. Each member is invited to offer up any personal intentions. We also pray for the good of the Church, for wisdom in our country and for the common good. Let us also bring to mind the poor, the sick and those who have died.

We join together in praying: Our Father...

### **Read and Reflect on the Scriptures** Matthew 6:1,3-6,9-15 (5 mins)

Note: The Lord's Prayer comes in the middle of St Matthew's account of the Sermon on the Mount. Chapter 6 gives us the pattern of Christian life: prayer, fasting and the giving of alms. This prayer, structured according to seven petitions (the Scriptural number of perfection), is our model for prayer.

A variety of short prayers before the reading of Scripture can be found on page 46.

'Beware of practising your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them, for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven... when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

'And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you...

'Pray then like this: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

'For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.'

## **Meditate on the Word** Matthew 6:1,3-6,9-15 (20 mins)

Once the Scripture passage has been read you are asked to choose a word or phrase that has struck you. Underline it with a pen or you might wish to simply hold it in mind. You will be invited to share the word or phrase with the group.

Another person will then read the passage. While you listen attentively, repeat the process of holding onto a word or phrase, making a note and sharing it. In doing this, you are invited to consider the following questions:

How have these words or phrases resonated in my heart and in my mind?

What is the Lord saying to me at this very moment in my life?

In what way has my reading of this passage of Holy Scripture changed me?

How has it helped me to resolve to be more Christ-like in the coming days?

You are encouraged to re-read the Holy Scripture during the coming week, revisiting these questions.

## **Explore and Reflect on the Theme** (25 mins)

During lockdown many people tried their hand at making bread, creating a daily loaf which was the work of their hands. People suddenly found they had time on their hands, because a good loaf takes time to prove and rise, and enjoyed the simple 'magic' where something as simple as flour and water, and little else, becomes something tasty and satisfying. The good baker knows that it is not complicated, you just need a daily routine which allows time so that the bread will be ready when you want it - when your hunger needs satisfying.

Two thousand years after Jesus taught us this simple request - to have basic food each day - we know that for many it remains a real prayer. Many people in our country have to turn to food banks to have access to something to feed them and their families. Many parishes have supported schemes to help those in need in the community so that they can have something to eat. This 'daily bread' is both a symbol and reality of the challenges which face us both locally and globally in terms of food production, climate change and economic systems and which often hit the poor and disadvantaged both globally and locally. To highlight just one aspect Pope Francis writes in *Laudato Si* that 'we know that approximately a third of all food produced is discarded, and "whenever food is thrown out it is as if it were stolen from the table of the poor' (LS 50). The Lord's Prayer begins with 'our' Father and continues here with give 'us'. Jesus is not inviting us to make the personal prayer of an individual but to pray for 'all, in solidarity with their needs and sufferings' (CCC 2829).

Indeed, at this point in the Lord's Prayer it takes a turn. So far Jesus has taught us to offer praise to our Father, now we ask for something, we make petition, which is the pattern for the rest of the prayer. This two-part structure of praise and petition is why the Lord's Prayer is called the model of prayer. It forms the pattern of many of the prayers in the liturgy, such as the Collects, where we offer praise to God for what he has done for us and then ask him to respond to our needs. This pattern can also form our own prayers.

At Mass we pray the Lord's Prayer shortly before the distribution of Holy Communion. As the prayer of the baptised it is one of the signs of our communion which prepares us to receive the Body and Blood of the Lord but we also pray this petition 'give us...' as sign of our desire to receive. In the Eucharist, we know that we do not live on bread alone but the word of God - the Bread of Life we seek is 'the Word of God accepted in faith, the Body of Christ received in the Eucharist' (CCC 2835).

## **Responding to what has been heard**

By committing ourselves to action we are saying that we want to make a difference in our lives and in the lives of others. We are committing to make the words of the Lord's Prayer resonate in our lives. What have you heard today that you find challenging? What do you find affirming? What is your response to God's offer of eternal life? Please share if you feel comfortable. What are you going to do about what you have heard today?

## Go in Peace to Love and Serve the Lord (10 mins)

You are invited to close with a time of meditation on Psalm 107(106). Read it slowly, pause between verses, reflect on its meaning for your life and your journey in faith, hope and love. You may also wish to conclude with the Lord's Prayer, another prayer of your own choosing or a moment of silence.

A: 'O give thanks to the LORD for he is good;  
for his mercy endures forever.'  
Let the redeemed of the LORD say this,  
those he redeemed from the hand of the foe,  
and gathered from far-off lands,  
from east and west, north and south.

B: They wandered in a barren desert,  
finding no way to a city they could dwell in.  
Hungry they were and thirsty;  
their soul was fainting within them.

A: Then they cried to the LORD in their need,  
and he rescued them from their distress,  
and he guided them along a straight path,  
to reach a city they could dwell in.

B: He stilled the storm to a whisper,  
and the waves of the sea were hushed.  
They rejoiced because of the calm,  
and he led them to the haven they desired.

All: Glory be to the Father, and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

A blessing taken from the Liturgy of the Hours is included here.

May the Lord bless us and keep us from all evil  
and bring us to everlasting life. Amen.

### What sustains us as Christians?

The Eucharist is our daily bread. The power belonging to this divine food makes it a bond of union. Its effect is then understood as unity, so that, gathered into his Body and made members of him, we may become what we receive.... This also is our daily bread: the readings you hear each day in church and the hymns you hear and sing. All these are necessities for our pilgrimage.

The Father in heaven urges us, as children of heaven, to ask for the bread of heaven. [Christ] himself is the bread who, sown in the Virgin, raised up in the flesh, kneaded in the Passion, baked in the oven of the tomb, reserved in churches, brought to altars, furnishes the faithful each day with food from heaven.

*St Augustine (cf. CCC 2837)*

I have never worried about our temporal affairs, and I have seen by experience that God has always provided for us. When our number increased the needs of all were supplied, thus verifying the divine promise: 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His justice, and all these things shall be added unto you.' (Matthew 6:33)

*St Paul of the Cross*

If it is 'daily bread,' why do you take it once a year? ... Take daily what is to profit you daily. Live in such a way that you may deserve to receive it daily. He who does not deserve to receive it daily, does not deserve to receive it once a year.

*St Ambrose of Milan*

**[See Catechism 2828-2837]**



### **Meditate on Sacred Art: Visio Divina (3)**

Describe what you can see, what is happening?

What does this picture say about the generosity of God?

In the Eucharist, Jesus himself, you receive the nourishment and grace to live out your vocation in the world. How might you live in this powerful reality?

Miracle of the Bread and Fish (1620-23) by Giovanni Lanfranco /  
National Gallery of Ireland