

THE CONGREGATION AT PRAYER

A Guide for Daily Meditation and Prayer

The week of Christmas

December 25-31, 2016

Catechetical Notes for the week: The address teaches us that God the Father is our Father who has given us life on earth and a new birth as His beloved children in Holy Baptism. We go to our Father in prayer in times of need and success, sadness and joy, health and sickness confident that as our Father He has and will give us all things in Christ. The address shows us that we have relied on ourself in times of need and not our gracious Father. We've forsaken Him, turned our backs on Him, or have filled our prayers with doubts and uncertainty because nothing seems to change. Thus, we accuse Him of not helping or caring about us. It calls us to repentance and faith in our good Father who gave His beloved Son for us so that in Christ we might also become beloved sons of God.

The first petition teaches us that God reveals His name to us only in His Word. God is holy and good, loving and compassionate even if no one believes in Him. It is only through Christ that we know God's name for He is the Holy One about whom the Scriptures testify. Thus, to teach God's Word in truth and purity is to teach Jesus for us and in us. The first petition shows us that we have profaned the name of God to suit our own ideas of who God should be, crafting a god who is like us instead of the God of Scripture. We have forgotten Christ as the Key to the Scriptures and have inserted ourselves. We have defiled God's name by immoral, unholy, improper living. It calls us to repentance and faith in the God revealed in the Scriptures only through Jesus.

Theme: God is Man

In the name of the Father and of the ☩ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

APOSTLES' CREED

BIBLE VERSE: 1 John 3:2 Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.

<i>What is the address?</i> Our Father who art in heaven.	Preschool+
<i>What does this mean?</i> 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.	1st Grade+
<i>What is the first petition?</i> Hallowed be Thy name.	Preschool+
<i>What does this mean?</i> God's name is certainly holy in itself, but we pray in this petition that it may be kept holy among us also.	2nd Grade+

<p><i>How is God's name kept holy?</i></p> <p>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!</p>	3rd Grade+
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DAILY READING		<i>The Story Bible page</i>
Monday	1 Kg 18:16-40	221
Tuesday	Mk 4:35-41	333
Wednesday	Mk 10:1-16	383
Thursday	Gn 8:1-22; (7:1-24)	36
Friday	Lk 10:1-20	361
Saturday	Genesis 17:1-14; Galatians 3:23-29; Luke 2:21	342

PRAYER

Pray the Catechism: *(The catechetical notes are meant to assist you in this.)*

Example:

Repeat the Address and First Petition

A teaching: Dear Father, in the address You teach me that you are my Father who desires to give me all good things and I am your dear child through Christ.

A thanksgiving: I thank You for making me your child through Holy Baptism and for doing all things for my good.

A confession: I confess and ask for grace that I have failed to diligently pray and trust in You at all times. My prayers have faltered. I have failed to view You as a good and gracious Father.

A prayer: I ask You to forgive me and hear my prayer for Jesus' sake.

Personal prayers: *(suggestions listed below)*

Sunday: *Pray for the joy of the resurrection among us; for true and godly worship throughout the world; and for the faithful preaching and hearing of God's Word.*

Monday: *Pray for faith to live in the promises of Holy Baptism; for your calling and daily work; for the unemployed; for the salvation and well-being of our neighbors; for government; and for peace.*

Tuesday: *Pray for deliverance against temptation; for the addicted and despairing; for the tortured and oppressed; and for those struggling with besetting sins.*

Wednesday: *Pray for marriage and family, that all may live together under the grace of Christ according to the Word of God; for parents who must rear their children alone; and for godly schools, our church schools, and seminaries.*

Thursday: *Pray for the Church and her pastors; for missionaries; and for fruitful and salutary use of the blessed Sacrament of the Lord's Body and Blood.*

Friday: *Pray for the preaching of the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ and for its spread throughout the whole world, especially in our community; and for the persecuted.*

Saturday: *Pray for faithfulness to the end; for the sick and dying; for the revival of those who are withering in the faith or have fallen away; and for receptive hearts for worship and study on the Lord's Day.*

Prayer for Christmas

Grant, we beseech You, Almighty God, that the new birth of Your only-begotten Son in the flesh; may set us free, who are held in the old bondage under the yoke of sin, through the same Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit: one God, now and forever.

Luther's Morning/Evening Prayer

Morning: I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have kept me this night from all harm and danger; and I pray that You would keep me this day also from sin and every evil, that all my doings and life may please You. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. Amen.

Evening: I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have graciously kept me this day; and I pray that You would forgive me all my sins where I have done wrong, and graciously keep me this night. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.