**ORDINARY TIME 17 C Lectionary Catechesis**

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**Guardian Angels Parish in Mead, CO**

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| Prayer organizes our readings mostly. Paul teaches us profound truths of our Baptism and subsequent life in Christ. Sometimes it seems facile just to say “I’ll pray for you.” What does that really mean? What do these readings teach us about authentic prayer and petition and praise. They really do go together. |

**FIRST READING: Genesis 18, 20-32**

Sodom and Gomorrah conjures images of all sorts of sexual goings on, although this is never actually mentioned in these narratives. Coupled with the Gospel about prayer this Sunday, Abraham’s bargaining with God in brazen and clever petitions is the focal point. Ezechiel 16, 49-50 “Behold, this was the guilt of your sister Sodom: she and her daughters had pride, excess of food, and prosperous ease, but did not aid the poor and needy. They were haughty and did an abomination before me. So I removed them, when I saw it.” Apparently the prophet Ezechiel was unaware of homosexuality as their sin. Some Bible translations use the “to have sex with them,” although the Hebrew original is “to know them.” The Hebrew very “to know” (yada) is used almost 1,000 times in the Bible, but only about a dozen of these instances have a sexual context, and in “and Adam knew her.” The point is on prayer, bargaining with God, perseverance and many more noble points than having our idle minds get locked into the problems of Sodom and Gomorrah. The story of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah immediately follows.

**Vs. 20: CCC 1867** Lists the sins that “cry out to heaven,” as a special category of offensive sins. The reader may wish to note this list.

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| **KNOW YOUR**  **FAITH** | Does God forgive the penitent whose sins have cried to heaven? How is this so?  Why does the Church tradition distinguish between weightiness of sins, mortal and venial? |
| **LIVE YOUR**  **FAITH** | Share a story of your own bargaining and wrangling with God.  God is looking for righteous people. What does righteousness mean to you? |
| **SHARE YOUR FAITH** | In the light of Jesus’ parable of the lost sheep, what is the mission of the Church regarding sinners?  What is the most bold prayer you can make on behalf of others? |
| **WORSHIP** | How does Sunday worship become a commitment of discipleship for you?  The text reads “and Abraham drew near” to God. How does the Sunday liturgy invite you to draw near and why is this almost presumptuous of us humans to do so? |

**First Reading**

**RESPONSORIAL: Psalm 138, 1-2. 2-3. 6-7. 7-8**

This psalm is frequently a responsorial. It certainly flows from the issues of hospitality, or lack, from the first reading, but also supplements the Gospel teaching on prayer. Prayer here is first and foremost song and praise, two concepts we do not always associate with prayer. It is also a prayer of thanks for God’s saving presence. One would like to think all the kings of the earth would praise God, but we too often see earthly leaders full of pride, arrogance, and a lack of concern for the lowly. Nonetheless, we find here one individual filled with confidence that God keeps promises and that God saves. The psalm ends with a note of mercy enduring forever, which we should fix on in our lives. God is praised for faithfulness and mercy.

**Psalm 138: CCC 304** God can and does act directly in our human history as Lord of history and first in all things.

**Vs. 2: CCC 214** God’s name reveals itself as “abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness” as the nature of God. (Ps 102) God manifests God In the “abounding” quality of every good thing.

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| **KNOW YOUR**  **FAITH** | How do we know for certain that God acts in human history?  Why doesn’t God then make all things work together all the time? |
| **LIVE YOUR**  **FAITH** | Praying in the trenches is an old saying. What are the trenches of your life that you could share when you pray the most?  The teaching here is also about guardian angels. What do you make of having a personal guardian angel who even prays and praises with you? |
| **SHARE YOUR FAITH** | The psalm is written in the voice of first person singular. Where’s do find the evangelization in this psalm?  How does your participation in Sunday worship evangelize? |
| **WORSHIP** | What do you do when you drive past a Catholic church? The psalmist says that he bows low toward the Temple.  What are ritual gestures and postures of worship? |

**Responsorial Psalm**

**SECOND READING: Colossians 2, 12-14**

A thematic thread running through Colossians sets out a theology of the heavenly as superior to the earthly. While it is true that Christ had been on earth in the flesh, he is now in heaven. Because we share in Him through baptism we fix our eyes on him and place first and foremost in our lives the things of heaven. Here in this passage, Paul is telling us that this bodily conformation to Christ began in Baptism. Because have shaped our understanding of Baptism around purification from sin, the aspect of being buried with Christ is very unfamiliar to people; it is so that we can rise with Christ. We can die and rise on our own, but for the power of God in us. When we were dead and buried in sin, Christ does three things named here: 1. His forgiveness brings us to life, 2. He wipes out legal claims against by way of the Law, 3. He nails all this to the cross, and then the part that follows our readings, Paul suggests evocatively that Christ’s peacemaking on the cross makes a “public spectacle” of the powers of this world and leads them away. It’s a great image. There’s a certain graphic quality to the passage and its context that startle us, but is very much a part of the core *kerygma* of the Church.

**Vss. 11-13: CCC 527** Jesus’ circumcision initiated him into Abraham’s covenant, and he submitted to the Law, the Prophets, and the Temple. The new covenant is initiated in Baptism.

**Vs. 12: CCC 628, 1002, 1214, 1227, 1694** Christ’s burial prefigures baptism’s burial by immersion as the full sign of the sacrament in the waters of chaos; “we were baptized into his death”. It is here that we enter the mystery of the *kerygma*, because only by dying can we be raised up. As we have been brought up out of the waters through death, so shall we be raised up to glory. Indeed we begin to experience this already now. To “baptize” means “to plunge” or “to immerse” in order to make white, as one would bleach a cloth. Through baptism we put on Christ. Baptism initiates our life in Christ, now as children of the light, and so we conform ourselves to Christ in every way.

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| **KNOW YOUR**  **FAITH** | What is a theology of Baptism from this passage?    Why must we be immersed in death and burial to free us from sin? |
| **LIVE YOUR**  **FAITH** | How are living our your baptismal commitment to live In the image of Christ and in the kingdom of God?  What does it mean for you to “put on Christ” and “to conform yourself to Christ”? |
| **SHARE YOUR FAITH** | Share how your life in Christ is attractive to others or invites them to put on Christ?  Connect this passage to a theology of the body. |
| **WORSHIP** | How does the Eucharistic Liturgy evoke the actions of Christ in vss. 13-14?  Why does the Church seem to only focus on baptism as purification from original sin? |

**Second Reading**

**GOSPEL: Luke 11, 1-13 Jesus’ Teachings about Prayer**

After the incident with Martha and Mary, Jesus seems to be suddenly alone somewhere with his disciples, and he is praying. So the question arises from a disciples about how to pray. Jesus teaches his prayer to the Father. Here we have Luke version, which the Church does not use liturgically; it differs from Matthew’s version which we all know by two petitions. It’s shorter. Our gospel has three parts: the actual Lord’s Prayer, a parable to explain perseverance in prayer, and a collection of three pithy sayings about prayer. The final note introduces, as Jesus seems to do always gradually, the role of the Holy Spirit in prayer. There’s a great deal to reflect on here. The teachings that follow are about driving out demons.

**Vs. 1: CCC 520, 2601, 2759, 2773** We also imitate Jesus in our prayer. We see Jesus at prayer and so we desire to imitate him. Jesus deliberately teaches prayer, and the Lord’s Prayer is a prayer of petitions (5 in Luke and 7 in Matthew).

**Vss. 2-4: CCC 2759 See above.**

**Vs. 2: CCC 2632** From the first petition, “thy kingdom come”, all the other petitions flow. Jesus teaches us In this prayer to “collaborate” with the Holy Spirit to realize the Kingdom of God.

**Vs. 4: CCC 1425, 2845** We do not justify ourselves; we need forgiveness for our sins, emphasizing here the importance of that little word “as” when it comes to forgiveness. Our forgiveness is a communal event. Sins are regarded as trespasses and debts we have against one another.

**Vs. 5-13: 2613** Luke’s gospel has three major parables on prayer: the widow, the man who knocks late, and the Pharisee and the tax collector. “Lord Jesus, have mercy on me, a sinner.” Is the Jesus Prayer.

**Vs. 9: CCC 2761** In a way, the Lord’s Prayer summarizes the Gospel. The general, overarching petitions of the Lord’s Prayer supersede all of our other petitions and needs that arise from our daily lives.

**Vs. 13: CCC 443, 728, 2623, 2671** Peter recognizes that Jesus is the Son of God by the will of the Father, and Jesus himself teaches us this in praying, “”Our Father, . . . “ Jesus gradually introduces his teachings about the Holy Spirit in his mission. The apostles were devoted to prayer when the Holy Spirit descended on Pentecost. We invoke the Holy Spirit through Jesus addressing the Father, the most direct petition being, “Come, Holy Spirit.”

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| **KNOW YOUR**  **FAITH** | Why does the petition about God’s kingdom coming lead off the list of petitions? In other words why is this one the most important?  Why do we always pray in and with the Holy Spirit? |
| **LIVE YOUR**  **FAITH** | When and how do you pray the Lord’s Prayer in your domestic Church?  In the economy of the kingdom of God the currency is grace, mercy, and love. How does the dynamics of reconciliation and forgiveness work in your life? |
| **SHARE YOUR FAITH** | The Lord’s Prayer is known to all Christians across every denomination. We can pray together. Have you ever prayed with a person(s) from another Christian tradition? What was that like for you?  What do you think people in our culture are most seeking today? |
| **WORSHIP** | Why has the wording of the Lord’s Prayer been such a strong tradition in the Church?  What do you suppose is meant by “daily bread?” |

**Gospel**

**Next Sunday: OT 18 C: Ecclesiastes 1, 2. 2, 21-23; Ps 90; Colossians 3, 1-5. 9-11; Luke 12, 13-21**