



Pope Francis dedicated his catechesis on Wednesday to the liturgical rites following the Eucharistic Prayer, which help us **“to dispose our souls to participate in the Eucharistic banquet.”**

The Our Father

Immediately following the Great Amen, the assembly recites together the Our Father, which was taught us by Christ Himself. This, the Pope said, is not just one Christian prayer among many. Rather, it is “the prayer of the children of God,” in which, as Jesus teaches us, we call God Father. The Our Father, recited not only in the Mass, but also in the Morning and Evening Prayer of the Church, gives a Christian character to the whole day, forming in us a filial attitude towards God, and a fraternal relationship with our neighbor.

In the Our Father, we ask God to give us “our daily bread,” a petition that has particular reference to the Eucharist. In remarks to Polish pilgrims following the catechesis, the Pope emphasized that it is necessary, if anyone has committed a grave sin, to receive absolution in the Sacrament of Reconciliation before receiving Holy Communion – and reminded us that Lent is a good time to make a good Confession in order to encounter Christ in the Eucharist.

The Lord’s Prayer also calls us to be reconciled with our brothers and sisters, when we pray for our sins to be forgiven, “as we forgive those who trespass against us.” And so, the Pope said, “while we open our hearts to God, the Our Father disposes us also to fraternal love.”

The sign of peace and the breaking of the Bread

This reconciliation, with God and with our brothers and sisters, receives a kind of “seal” in the exchange of peace, which in the Roman Rite of the liturgy is “ordered” to Eucharistic Communion. We pray that Christ will give us His peace, “so different from that of the world.” We cannot approach Holy Communion, the Pope said, echoing Saint

Paul, without first making peace with one another.

This part of the Mass culminates in the fraction rite, “the breaking of the Bread,” which from Apostolic times gave its name to the whole Eucharistic celebration. Pope Francis reminded the faithful that it was in the breaking of the Bread that the disciples recognized the Risen Lord at Emmaus. Likewise, at Mass, “in the Eucharistic Bread, broken for the life of the world, the praying assembly recognizes the true Lamb of God, that is, Christ the Redeemer, and prays to Him, ‘have mercy on us, grant us peace.’”

These final invocations before Holy Communion, Pope Francis said, “help us to dispose our souls to participate in the Eucharistic banquet, the source of communion with God and with our brothers and sisters.”