

The Lectionary readings begin with Abraham petitioning God to save Sodom and Gomorrah and move on to Psalm 138 assuring the Faithful that God hears petitions. Colossians contains the promise of Baptism and Luke gives the Faithful the Our Father. These readings are about prayers of petition. They show not only how to ask, but what to ask for. The key is in the Alleluia verse, *You have received a Spirit of adoption*, meaning the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is what to ask for.

In the spirit of these readings, at Daily Mass, some women make the same multiple petitions day after day. Since these comments are prepared for the Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church Summer Scripture Series: Men's Scripture Sharing, Saturday Mornings, 8:30-10:00, July 17th through August 21st, 2004, the comments on the women need not be taken as confrontational, but simply observational. Comparatively, males make relatively few petitions at Daily Mass. The petitions of the Faithful are reflections of the patriarchs gone before.

Genesis 18:20-32

In this passage, Abraham works to minimize the anger of God against sinful humanity. Abraham is not bargaining, because God is agreeing to everything Abraham asks. Abraham overcomes his anthropomorphic conception of God to keep on asking, beyond what any human would endure. The Gospel encourages such petitioning.

Psalm 138:1-2, 2-3, 6-7, 7-8

Comments on Psalm 138 are found at Bible Study040208_Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time_75C.doc

The Lectionary uses this Psalm in the following places:

<u>Readings</u>	<u>Page in Lectionary</u>	<u>Verses used</u>	
75C	557	1-2, 2-3, 4-5, 7-8 (1 c)	Ordinary 5
111C	736	1-2, 2-3, 4-5, 7-8 (3 a)	Today
121A	785	1-2, 2-3, 4-5, 6, 8 (8 b c)	Ordinary 21

The verse 3a antiphon, *Lord, on the day I called for help, you answered me* continues the sense of petition. There is no helper like the Holy Spirit. Continuing the examination of verse 3a, an unexplained discrepancy occurs in the Lectionary between verse 3 Today with Ordinary 21 and verse 3 at Ordinary 5. Today and Ordinary 21 have a comma after *When I called* but Ordinary 5 does not. *When* is capitalized in Today with Ordinary 5 but not in Ordinary 21. I have no idea how to account for the differences.

In verse 8, the Psalmist refers to himself as part of the wonders of Creation, `the work of his hands.'¹ Verse 8 can readily be taken as a promise from God to perfect the Baptized Faithful, who are being heard. Through time, the Faithful have learned to ask for the Holy Spirit Himself, which is what to ask for.

Colossians 2:12-14

Nowhere in Sacred Scripture is there a unified explanation of Baptism. Nowhere are there details about how to Baptize.² The New Testament presents Baptism through its effects on the Faithful, not on what it is in itself. Those effects come through the Holy Spirit. The New Testament uses the Baptized Faithful as a proof of the Resurrection.³ Colossians insists Baptism buries the Faithful to sin with Christ who nailed sin to the cross. In other words, petitioning God is not sinful. Petitioning God for himself in the person of the Holy Spirit is a truly holy enterprise.

Verse 13

<u>Lectionary</u> (1998):	uncircumcision
<u>The Vulgate</u> (circa 410):	praeputio
<u>Douay-Rheims</u> (1582-1610):	uncircumcision of your flesh
<u>King James</u> (1611):	uncircumcision of your flesh
<u>Jerusalem</u> (1966):	had not been circumcised
<u>New American</u> (1970):	uncircumcision
<u>New Jerusalem</u> (1985):	uncircumcised in body

The translators do not want to use the *foreskin*, *praeputio* word.

Colossians is simply making the point that the First Testament is fulfilled in the New Testament and in the ability to pray for the coming of the Holy Spirit. The Faithful do not simply think of the Holy Spirit as a person, but as an attitude toward life.

Romans 8:15b c

The Spirit of adoption, mentioned here, implies the gift of Holy Spirit as the answer to all prayer.

¹ J. Ross Wagner, "From the Heavens to the Heart: The Dynamics of Psalm 19 as Prayer," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 61, No. 2 (April 1999) 249.

² Hendrikus Boers, "The Structure and meaning of Romans 6:1-14," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 63, No. 4 (October 2001) 669.

³ John Kloppenborg, "An Analysis of the Pre-Pauline Formula 1 Cor 15:3b-5 In Light of Some Recent Literature," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 40, No. 3 (July 1978) 367.

Luke 11:1-13

The prayer of petition melds with respect. In this passage, Luke demonstrates respect for Greek scholarship. This Gospel is not about frivolity.

Hallowed be your name is about a sacred, holy act, God revealing his holy name in the first place. The syntax used moves around the Aramaic, directly from the Hebrew to the Greek Septuagint. In this passage, Luke is drawing from the Greek translation of the Hebrew.⁴ In understanding and sharing Sacred Scripture, one errs to dismiss scholarship summarily.

From the Greek, the Our Father in Matthew petitions for bread for one day, whereas Luke in verse 3 is asking for bread from day to day.⁵ One would think that God knows how to run his world. Nevertheless, that is not how Jesus teaches the Faithful to pray. Jesus even directs his disciples to petition for something as mundane as bread. The Fathers of the Church regarded this bread as Eucharistic, but that would not be the ordinary meaning.

Not wanting to be led into temptation merits examination because of the variety of translations.

Verse 4

<u>Lectionary</u> (1998):	the final test
<u>The Vulgate</u> (circa 410):	tentationem
<u>Douay-Rheims</u> (1582-1610):	temptation
<u>King James</u> (1611):	temptation
<u>Jerusalem</u> (1966):	the test
<u>New American</u> (1970):	the final test
<u>New Jerusalem</u> (1985):	the test

The traditional words of the Our Father, *and lead us not into temptation*, must not be the best translation.

⁴ Maximilian Zerwick, S.J., English Edition adapted from the Fourth Latin Edition by Joseph Smith, S.J., Scripta Pontificii Instituti Biblico—114—Biblical Greek (Roma: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 1994) 133-134.

⁵ Maximilian Zerwick, S.J., English Edition adapted from the Fourth Latin Edition by Joseph Smith, S.J., Scripta Pontificii Instituti Biblico—114—Biblical Greek (Roma: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 1994) 78.

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In verse 9, from the Greek, *seek* and *knock* refer to continuing activity, rather than an English translation implying a one-time activity.⁶ Petitioning for the Holy Spirit, then, is ever appropriate.

A place where the Holy Spirit is needed is in verses 11 and 12 where, Jesus seems to tell men to provide food, such as fish and eggs. Is Jesus upsetting patriarchal social structure? Because Galilean material culture is not well studied, the question is legitimate at least to pose, though not to answer without the needed research.⁷

In this passage, Jesus is explicit that the Father in heaven will *give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him* (verse 13). The Holy Spirit encompasses all other gifts. The Holy Spirit is what to ask for through the Lectionary readings for today.

Abraham has direct contact with the Holy Spirit as Abraham petitions the LORD for mercy upon Sodom and Gomorrah. Abraham is bold in his requests, *though I am but dust and ashes* (Genesis 18:27). Psalm 138 has confidence because the LORD created the psalmist, that is, the Faithful petitioner. Colossians connects prayer with the sacraments, through Baptism. The Alleluia Verse gets right to the point with the *Spirit of adoption, through which we cry, Abba, Father* (Romans 8:15b c). Luke, by mentioning food and bread associates a Eucharistic dimension with the request for *the Holy Spirit to those who ask him* (Luke 11:13).

For more on sources and their availability, besides the footnotes, see the Appendix file.

⁶ Maximilian Zerwick, S.J., English Edition adapted from the Fourth Latin Edition by Joseph Smith, S.J., Scripta Pontificii Instituti Biblico—114—Biblical Greek (Roma: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 1994) 79.

⁷ F. Gerald Downing, "In Quest of First-Century C.E. Galilee," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 66, No. 1 (January 2004) 91-92.