

The disciples said to Jesus, “Lord, teach us how to pray.”

What he taught them we now know as the Lord’s Prayer.

Today I want to focus on just one part of it:

“Give us this day our daily bread.”

Jesus knows we need DAILY bread because despite what we tell ourselves
THIS DAY is about all we can manage.

Now I kind of hope I’m not the only person who struggles with this...
but I have these fantasies that I...

I am the one person who can see what’s really going on.

OTHER people get trapped in their workplace dramas,
but I...I am the one who sees the big picture.

OTHER members of my family play out
their unconscious family systems conflicts,
but I...I am the one who can self-differentiate and act rationally.

OTHER people in the country are being manipulated
by their media consumption and their tribal loyalties,
but I...I am the one who can rise above it and see it for what it is.

PSSSSH.

Despite what some of us tell ourselves, we can’t rise above it all.
We are ALL trapped in right now.

A medieval historian named Helen Castor says she always
writes her books of history chronologically
because human beings can only live chronologically,
because not even kings and queens can rise above right now.

“We all live from day to day,” she said,
“We don’t know what’s going to happen in the next hour,
in the next day, in the next week.”¹

We don’t know what’s coming tomorrow.
We don’t really understand how our actions today
will affect the future.
So we need bread/manna/wisdom/grace from God every single day.

Kris Kristofferson had it right:
“One day at a time, Sweet Jesus. That’s all I’m asking from you.”

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Jesus says DAILY bread and yet it seems like
all any of us are doing right now is planning for the future.

School is starting up. I hear there are backpacks to get ready.

Here at Holy Trinity our preschoolers are coming back,
and I spent last week working on the fall pledge campaign,
and Fr. Rhett’s whiteboard is one big calendar stretching out to May,
and Amy has been setting up her new Godly Play classrooms,
and Will has sent out the choir calendar through Trinity Sunday 2026,
and I just know in my heart that our most excellent organizer
Mo. Ellen Purdum has a secret file folder called “Newcomers 2028.”

Planning is good. Organization is good.
And yet Jesus tells us to pray not for the future,
but for right now - for this day, this moment.

¹ Conversations with Tyler podcast, “Helen Castor on Medieval Power and Personalities.” July 23, 2025, 43:00.

Maybe it's because Jesus knows we aren't very good
at being in this moment,
that we actually have to rely on God just to get through this one day.

And for evidence of that need we only need to look right here,
to the people whom life has humbled enough to seek out God's help.
The sinners. The fallen.
The hospital for wayward souls we call the Church.

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At my last parish there was a man we'll call Matt.

Matt was born and raised at St. Peter's in Rome, GA,
but his life had been derailed by a terrible mix
of mental illness and self-medication.

I didn't really know Matt.

He would only talk to Roger, the rector of St. Peter's.

Sometimes he would ask Roger for money, even though he had plenty.
Other times he just wanted to talk to Roger
about whatever was on his mind.

Roger couldn't always drop everything for Matt like he wanted,
but he made sure Matt knew that he was a member of St. Peter's
just as much as anybody else,
and he taught this newly ordained priest the same lesson.

One Wednesday night Matt came to the 5:30 service.

Everyone else had sat down and Roger was about to start
when he saw Matt standing outside the chapel
trying to gather himself enough to come in.

“Shut up, Matt. Shut up, Matt. Shut up, Matt!”
he said to himself over and over and over,
trying to quiet the voices in his head.

But he couldn't. Matt couldn't quiet his mind enough
to sit down in the Church that had known him his whole life.
Roger waited for him but finally Matt walked away.

Matt wasn't interested in the Church's future,
wasn't interested in Roger's calendar for the fall,
or in the parish's plans for helping the people of Rome.

He was there begging God for help to get through that moment,
for just enough peace to enter God's house.

Matt didn't find the peace he needed that day.
Sometimes prayer is like that.
Maybe that's why Jesus tells us to be persistent in prayer.

But over the years Matt kept coming to the priest of his church,
connecting to God in the only way he could manage,
by talking to his priest about whatever was on his mind
and asking for money he didn't really need.

In other words,
he came to God's house asking for just enough to get through one more day.

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God has given this parish a special gift:
the gift of spiritual and emotional health.

But we have plenty of Matt's here, too.

Some of them were born and raised here,
while others wander in for a season and then disappear.

Some of our Matt's are easy to spot while others are good at blending in.

Sometimes they are drawn here looking for help with money or food.

Sometimes they just want to be seen and heard.

Some say they need help with demons.

They are almost always looking for peace.

Really they are drawn here for the same reason we all are: DAILY bread.

Just enough from God to make it through one more day.

Now if Christianity were about BUILDING the Kingdom of God...

if the Lord's Prayer was about us fixing the world on God's behalf...

then we would turn away all the Matt's of the world

and just look for people healthy enough (and rich enough)

to build a better world.

Mo. Ellen's new member integration ministry

would be like sorority rush at Alabama,

figuring out who was good enough to get in.

But instead Our Lord gave us THIS prayer,

this DAILY prayer because Jesus wanted us to remember

that Church is for Matt as much as anybody else,

and because Jesus knows what most of us try very hard to forget:

that we are, each of us, one phone call, one distracted driver,

one unexpected job loss, one hurricane, one tornado, one lone

gunman, one misbehaving thyroid,

one betrayal...just one broken hip away from being just one

more Matt in the world than we want to admit.

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I'll close like this:

If you are holding onto life by your fingertips this morning...
if your rough edges are a little more visible today than everybody else's...
we desperately need you here.

And if you are one of those people who SEEMS to be doing just fine
but only because nobody knows how tenuous your life is right now,
we desperately need you here, too.

This is God's house. YOU are the beloved work of his hands.

And if you do have it together today...
if your hard work has paid off and you feel strong & safe...
if you are one of those mighty oaks planted beside good water
that we rely on for leadership & stability...
then of course this is your house, too.

We need the Good Samaritans just as much as we need
the people lying hurt on the side of the road.

Remember, you mighty oaks,
that when your time of trial comes, or comes back,
whether it's from age or illness or sin or just bad luck,
you don't have to pretend to be strong to be loved.
We will try our best to be there for you, too.

Most of all, know this: even if WE let you down, Jesus won't.
GOD's grace WILL BE SUFFICIENT for you,
especially on the day you need it most. Amen.