

Liturgy of the Eucharist

Communion Rite

The Lord's Prayer

The Lord's Prayer enjoys a unique place in Christian tradition, spirituality, and worship. Two textual versions are found in the New Testament: *Luke 11: 1-4* and *Matthew 6:9-13*. The prayer entered the liturgy early. St. Ambrose (339-397) mentions its use in Milan and St. Gregory the Great (590-604) made several changes in its use and place in the liturgy.

The Lord's Prayer is a petition for daily food, which for Christians means preeminently the Eucharistic bread, and also for purification from sin, so that what is holy may be given to those who are holy. The final petition in the Our Father has customarily been followed by an expression asking the Lord to grant perfect peace. This addition is known as the "embolism" and is said by the priest alone. The Byzantine rite traditionally ends the prayer with the acclamation, "For the Kingdom, the power and the glory..." which resulted from the desire to end the prayer with a statement more positive than "deliver us from evil".

Rite of Peace

Among the early Christians the kiss of peace was seen as a seal on a prayer. This gesture soon passed into the liturgy and during the early 400's took its place after the recitation of the Our Father. This position harmonized with the prayer's last petition that we be forgiven "as we forgive those who trespass against us". Eventually the sign became closely linked with the reception of the Eucharist. It was exchanged when the Eucharist was distributed outside Mass; within Mass it was frequently reserved for those who would be receiving the Sacrament.

The priest, with hands extended, says aloud the prayer, "Lord Jesus Christ, you said..." After this prayer is concluded, extending and then joining his hands, he gives the greeting of peace and the people respond. Next the deacon, or in his absence, the presiding priest requests all to share a sign of peace with one another. It is appropriate for each person to offer the sign of peace to those nearest.