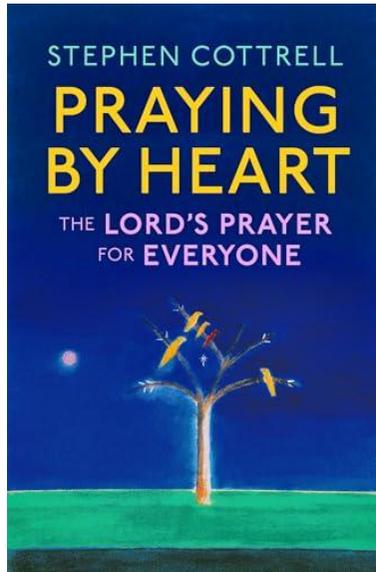


## Week Three

### Part Three – ‘Three Humble Requests’



#### Introductory Comments

- The three declarations that form the first part of the Lord's Prayer are followed by three humble requests. They demonstrate how the Lord's Prayer teaches us what we should be asking from God.

---

*'As Pope Francis has put it, the three requests that complete the prayer "express our fundamental needs: 'bread, forgiveness, and help in temptation.'"*

---

- You can understand the Lord's Prayer thus: the first half of the prayer is about God's *divinity* and God's life, as it were, *in heaven*. The second half is about our *humanity*, and therefore is concerned with what happens *on earth*.
- John Dominic Crossan observes how the first three petitions centre around the word 'your', referring directly to God, while the second three petitions centre around the word 'our', referring directly to 'us' and what we need from God and how the world may be ordered as God intends.

### **Give us today our daily bread**

- To pray 'Give us today our daily bread' invites us to reflect upon the relationship between *need* and *desire*.
- It also helps us to reflect on what our world might look like if it were ordered around the provision of daily bread for **everyone**, and how I might learn to stop expecting more than my share.
- In the social teaching of the Church, there is the phrase 'the bias towards or the 'preferential

## Jeremy Taylor (1613-1667), Anglican Divine, on the Lord's Prayer

...the petitions of the Lord's Prayer suggest the different relationships we have with God. In these three, we come as a 'necessitous beggar' asking for bread; as a sinner, 'a penitent servant' asking forgiveness; as a person 'in affliction and danger' longing for safety.



option' to the poor, making sure every decision we make is judged by its impact on those who are most deprived and most underprivileged. Underpinning this principle are two pillars of social justice, namely solidarity or human interdependence, and the idea of the common good. Pope Francis describes this as *'the good we all share in, the good of the people as a whole, as well as the good we hold in common that should be for all.'*

- We therefore need economic systems and ethical frameworks that demonstrate solidarity with each other as ***one humanity inhabiting one world and therefore bound together by bonds of mutual love.*** Remember when we pray 'Our Father' we remember we are *all* God's children whether we like it or not.
- This understanding is counter-cultural: political and economic thinking rarely includes discussion of the common good. People themselves are usually spoken about as either employees or consumers. The market decides. There is only one incentive in society: financial growth and accumulation of financial wealth.
- This brings us back to bread. And to the uncomfortable and unfashionable concept of

## Pope Francis on economic injustice

'The free market is anything but free for huge numbers of people, above all for the poor, who end up with little or no choice in practice...solidarity (with the poor) is not the sharing the crumbs from the table, but to make space at the table for everyone.'

‘enough’. What we have is often *more* than enough and an economic system built upon maintaining our market-driven need to *want* more than enough.

- Algorithms, advertising often tell us what we need and how to buy it cheaply. So we say we *need* this holiday, a new car, yet another outfit. What we mean is that we *want* these things, but we have so blurred the lines between need and desire that we no longer even notice it exists. At what cost to the poorest people of the world, and also in extension to our planet?

---

**‘What Money Can’t Buy: The Moral Limits of Markets’** by Michael J. Sandal: *‘We have drifted from having a market economy to being a market society.’*

---

- The meaning of the word ‘economy’ comes from two Greek words: *oikos*= ‘household’ and ‘*nomos*’ = ‘law’, thus the literal meaning is ‘*the law of the household*’. Furthermore *nomos* has its origins in another Greek word ‘*nemein*’ meaning to ‘*distribute*’, indicating that law and justice have something to do with fair distribution.
- A good economy is meant to be like a well-run household. Everyone is treated equally and fairly. In a family – a household – *it would be unthinkable that at the dinner table some were fed while others went hungry.*
- This approach to life – and economics is called *distributive justice*. It is a theme that runs through the Bible, especially in the teachings of the Old Testament prophets and in the story of the

liberation of the Jewish people from slavery in Egypt. The social code of the Jewish Law is rooted in the common experience of the Hebrews once being slaves in Egypt and God's liberation of his people. God fed them with manna from heaven. *Everyone had enough. But no one had more than enough.*

- The idea of the Jubilee Year and the Sabbath are rooted in the collective Jewish memory of slavery. And because they had been slaves, God commands them to remember what they were, and they should extend the generosity of God shown them, to others, *especially those who were strangers and outcasts.*
- The Sabbath and Jubilee extends to the land itself. Every year a portion of the harvest was left for the poor and the stranger. Every seventh year the land itself rested. Every fiftieth year (seven x seven), there was a super-Sabbath for the land where not only the land rested, but debts were cancelled. *This is a model of stewardship, not ownership. God requires us to share what we have with those who are in need.*

---

*'Sabbath rest...is a political act: an injunction to good and just stewardship of the world, where we strive for the common good, not just individual gain. Therefore, the measure for enough is the measure of the needs of the poor and the needs of the planet, not just the imagined or manufactured needs of a market economy.'*

---

- Therefore, ‘Give us today our daily bread’ means a fair distribution of food, but also a fair distribution of security; a fair distribution of land, of education, of access to health, of opportunity, and even to justice itself.

---

*Our first responsibility is that everyone has their daily bread. This will necessarily mean some of us having less. But it won't mean creating less wealth. On the contrary we need more and more people invested in just and sustainable development.*

---

- The Greek word for ‘daily’ is *epiousios* and does not appear anywhere else in the New Testament. Although translated as ‘daily’ it means more than this. A richer translation could be, ‘Give us today our bread for tomorrow.’

---

*‘The bread we pray for is the bread of the kingdom in all its totality, physical, spiritual, unconventional and therefore eucharistic in every possible sense.’ It is actual bread, but also the bread of heaven.*

---

- For some parts of the world and for some parts in it, it is always feast. For others, it is always fast. Not only does our society fail to acknowledge the common good and distribute things fairly as in a

## A new ethic?

‘An evolved, intelligent and elegant form of capitalism that puts the Earth at its very centre (as our one and only world) and ensures that all people are its beneficiaries’

*Jonathan Porritt*

---

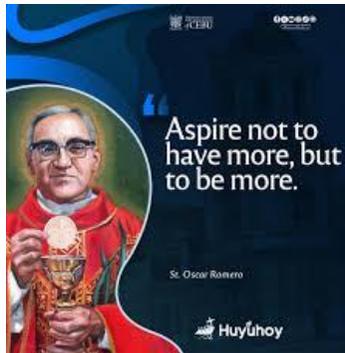
well-run household, we tolerate and knowingly enable certain parts of society to live with huge excess while others don't have enough.



- We need to think that God always provides in abundance (The Feeding of the 5000, the Wedding Feast at Cana). However, we seem to think we never have 'enough'. We crave for more, often at the expense of others. We are like the ravenous seagull, constantly squawking 'Mine! Mine!' We have learnt from an early age to possess, to grab, not to share but hold on. We pray 'give **us** today **our** daily bread' not 'give **me** today **my** daily bread.'

## Pope Francis

'Would it be good for us to linger a bit over this petition and to think about how many people do not have bread?'



---

*'Enough' is not miserable. I will have my share. But it will be more lovely because what I used to have just for myself is now shared with others. Moreover, finding contentment in enough, and making the changes to our lifestyles that living with enough demands, come from a deep awareness that God will provide for us, and that God will give us our basic needs and be with us in times of difficulty and need.'*

---

**Reflection questions:**

1. What in your view does 'enough' look like?
2. What changes would you expect to see in the world and in your own life if we lived with just enough?

Next Session – Thurs 19<sup>th</sup> March, St. Martin's, Aldington  
@7pm