

This past week we had a very successful Vacation Bible School here at Holy Family. Those who were here learned some new songs and learned about the importance of God's Word. So for them – if you hear any familiar phrases throughout my homily – I want you to respond as you did all week long by saying: Let's Go! So, if I say "God's Word is true." you say:

Let's Go!

God's Word is true: Let's Go! *Good job!*

As reported in Catholic Digest magazine a few months ago – these are some children's prayers to God.

Joyce prayed:

Dear God, thank you for the baby brother – but what I asked for was a puppy – not a brother. I wish you could have gotten it right as I have never asked you for anything before. You can look it up. Amen.

Peter prayed:

Dear God, please send Dennis Clark to a different summer camp than me this year. Just once, I would like to enjoy camp.

Amanda prayed:

Dear God, please put another holiday between Christmas and Easter. There is nothing good in there right now. Amen.

And finally, Thomas prayed:

Dear God. I sure did not think orange went well with purple. That is until I saw the sunset you made on Tuesday night. That was really cool.

I'm going to go out on a limb and speculate that even though we thought these prayers were funny, most of our prayers are probably much like them. We are usually asking God for something we want, maybe complaining about something we got, and *every once in a while* we thank God for God's goodness to us – regardless of what we have received. . . .

God's word is comforting: Let's Go (I'm just checking to make sure you are paying attention!)

“Lord, teach us to pray,” is the request of one of the disciples today. And since he qualifies the request, “just as John taught his disciples.”

He may be making the request partly in response to an earlier criticism of Jesus launched by the Pharisees who said: “The disciples of John fast often and offer prayers, but yours just eat and drink.”

But I think mostly the disciples are asking Jesus to teach them to pray because of the example of Jesus, himself. Since the beginning of Luke's Gospel and today we read from the eleventh chapter, we have been told 6 different times how Jesus “withdrew to pray” (3:21, 5:16, 6:12, 9:18, 9:28, 9:29).

Six times Jesus has taken the time to “pray in solitude.” And Jesus was a very busy man. And yet so many times I find myself saying that I don’t have time to pray – because I am too busy.

Jesus, himself, models well the fact that from time to time we need to let the Martha-side of us go (when we are anxious and worried about many things) and nurture the Mary-side of ourselves (when we choose the better part – sitting at the feet of Jesus -- *maybe* even taking our anxieties and worries to the Lord).

And possibly remember something I read a couple of weeks ago, when we don’t get an answer to our prayers, it may just be that we aren’t close enough to the Lord to hear the answer. For our God, who is like a good father or a friend, will give us what we need.

God’s word is surprising: Let’s Go! Good job!

In response to the request to teach them how to pray, Jesus gives the disciples the prayer that is so familiar to us: The Our Father. Perhaps it may be too familiar to us – and we fail to see the real significance of the words.

Father, hallowed be your name. We get to talk to God using the same affectionate name that Jesus uses – Abba, that is Father – and we say that God is hallowed – that is holy – one who is to be revered and adored.

We then admit that we want to be part of God's kingdom – not one of our own making – by embracing three things: living each day in dependence upon God's help, humbly forgiving all who have hurt or harmed us, and consciously recognizing our weakness when it comes to temptation.

Luke, true to one of his Gospel's themes, certainly casts the kingdom as belonging to those who are willing to admit they are poor and lost.

God's word is life-changing: Let's Go!

It certainly is. . . . Most of us, I think, are usually disturbed by the thought of “forgiving us our sins for we ourselves forgive everyone in debt to us.”

But today, I want to suggest that the real sleeper of a challenge that we usually rattle through without giving it much thought is the “give us each day our daily bread.”

Which means we are saying we will stay dependent on God to give us what we need to live and *not* try to be so independent.

“Give us each day our daily bread.”

We can quickly and surely lose our focus on the kingdom of God when we have **MORE** than our daily bread, when the rich oppress the poor and the earth is bruised and broken by the ones who still want more. . . .

And we can just as easily lose our focus on the kingdom if we have **LESS** than our daily bread and life turns into a struggle just to have what we need. . .

“Give us each day our daily bread.” means we will be dependent on God not puffed up with ourselves which will be the point of the parable Jesus tells us next week.

Between now and then, let’s reflect on whether we truly do “seek first the kingdom of God” or do we strive to be as independent from God as we possibly can.

And also reflect on the fact that God’s Word is for everyone. Let’s
Go!