

*by Revs. Casey and Robert Baggott*

*“Our daily bread”*

A few days ago we were visiting church members in the hospital, and as we often do, we concluded the visits by saying the Lord’s Prayer with the patients. On our way home we began to discuss that practice and the universal Christian love of the Lord’s Prayer. It is undeniably the most frequently and most widely offered prayer among Christians, the world over. What accounts for its centrality in the life of Christian faith? Is it so loved because of its source (Jesus), or because of its content, or both?

We may never have a definitive answer to that question. But regardless of why we frequently offer this timeless prayer, the result is the same. Its every word and phrase is deeply etched in our minds and hearts. Repeating those familiar words soothes us by recalling the myriad other times we have said and heard the prayer...when celebrating, when struggling, when grieving, when searching. This prayer has accompanied us on our way, in both good times and bad, and has seen us through. This prayer has been set to music, carved in stone, woven in tapestries, and of course, engraved upon our memories.

Perhaps one reason for the prayer’s extraordinary importance to us is that it reminds us to focus our attention concretely on the here and now. The first petition of the prayer is: “Give us this day our daily bread.” The prayer **does not** say, “Orchestrate to perfection every detail of my life from this point forward for my whole lifetime.” It **does** express the legitimate human concern to satisfy today’s hunger by locating nourishment for today’s meals. That’s all.

Many of our worries and concerns might be considerably lessened, if we could confine our primary focus to the necessities of this day, instead of anticipating tomorrow’s concerns and fretting over them, as well. By using the word “daily,” in this prayer, Jesus is reminding us that life comes to us in a rhythmic sequence of day and night, day and night. And after all, maybe God’s grace and strength is best understood and ingested, bit by bit, step by step, day by day, as daily bread.

Interestingly, another prayer commonly prayed the world over is the Serenity Prayer, which also places a significant emphasis on the attention to living well this day, and this day only. After the familiar lines of this prayer which request God to grant serenity, comes the request to be able to live one day at a time and enjoy one moment at a time.

If the wisdom of rooting ourselves with simplicity in this day, with all its attendant joys and hopes, problems and concerns, is not yet clear to us, maybe we should take a deep breathe, find a quiet moment, and recite the favorite prayers of the ages that remind us to seek peace in meeting the simplest and most basic needs of this day.

We pray you will look to meeting this day’s needs for yourself, and for others. May we all find the daily bread we need – today.