

# Liturgy Lesson Twenty Eight: The Our Father

## Part II

The Lord's Prayer first became a part of the Mass in the late Fourth Century. It comes immediately after the Great Amen and is the first prayer of the Communion Rite. It is an ideal preparation prayer for Communion because of its themes of bread, forgiveness and peace.

Interestingly, although this is the most well-known prayer in Christianity, prior to the reforms of Vatican II, this prayer was said only by the priest, and the congregation simply responded "Amen" at the end. Now we not only pray it together, but it is sometimes sung which emphasizes its dignity.

Perhaps you have noticed that some join hands during this prayer or some individuals raise their hands in a gesture similar to that of the priest. This is a spontaneous development in many parishes throughout the world. Of all the prayers of the Mass that priest and people say together, such as the Gloria or the Holy, Holy, the Our Father is the only one which the Sacramentary calls for the priest to extend his hands. It is not inappropriate then, since the people are also to say this prayer, that they use a similar gesture.

Gestures such as this are not, however, part of our tradition and certainly no judgment should be made by anyone of those who choose to use a gesture or not. The important points to remember are that this is the one prayer that Jesus taught us, and it is the prayer chosen by the Church to help us prepare for Communion.