

## Handout 1: Matthew Lesson 10

In chapter 6 Jesus continues His homily, moving from teaching on the commands of the Old Testament law to teaching on other standards of Christian discipleship. Jesus continues with warnings against acts of charity that are only external acts offered in order to be seen and admired. He gives three examples of acts that should be offered in secret in the private lives of Christians in order not to divert glory to God into glory to self:

1. almsgiving (Mt 6:1-4)
2. prayer (Mt 6:5-15)
3. fasting (Mt 6:16-18)

These three religious acts continue to be the hallmarks of Christian penance (CCC 1434, 2043, 2447, 2462, 2744-45). *Prayer and fasting are good, but better than either is almsgiving accompanied by righteousness. It is better to give alms than to store up gold; for almsgiving saves one from death and expiates every sin. Those who regularly give alms shall enjoy a full life ...* (Tobit 12:8-9; also see Sir 3:29).

These three acts of Christian virtue express continual conversion in turning away from sin in three ways:

1. Almsgiving: conversion in relation to others
2. Prayer: conversion in relation to God
3. Fasting: conversion in relation to oneself

Each of these acts of religion offers the Christian the means of obtaining expiation of sins (CCC 1434).

The Catholic Church teaches about almsgiving in CCC 1434, 1438, 1969, 2447, 2462.

- Almsgiving becomes a form of penitence for our sins
- It is part of our obligation in sharing of the love of God with others under the New Law
- Almsgiving is a work of mercy in which we can thank God for the mercy He has shown us by extending His mercy to others

The New Law practices the acts of religion: almsgiving, prayer and fasting, directing them to the “Father who sees in secret,” in contrast with the desire to “be seen by men.” Its prayer is the Our Father. CCC 1969

Both the Beatitudes and the Lord’s Prayer reflect the number 7, which in Scripture signifies fullness, perfection and is the number of the Holy Spirit. Some examples of St. Matthew’s use of 7 as a “perfect number”:

- Matthew begins his Gospel with Jesus’ genealogy in 3 x 14 or 6 x 7 generations with Jesus’ name as the seventh seven.
- The list of 7 Beatitudes in 5:3-10.
- The 7 petitions of the Lord’s Prayer.
- The 7 loaves and seven baskets in the miracle feeding of the four thousand in 15:34-37.
- 7 parables of Jesus beginning in Matthew chapter 13.
- Jesus’ command to forgive one who offends not just 7 times but 77 times in Matthew 18:22.
- 7 curses against the Pharisees in Matthew 23:13-32.

Handout 2: Matthew Lesson 10

<i>A Comparison of the Lord's Prayer in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke</i>	
<i>Matthew 6:9-13</i>	<i>Luke 11:2-4</i>
Invocation: <i>Our Father in heaven</i>	Invocation: <i>Father</i>
Petition 1: <i>Hollowed be <u>your</u> name</i>	Petition 1: <i>Hollowed be <u>your</u> name</i>
Petition 2: <i><u>Your</u> kingdom come</i>	Petition 2: <i>May <u>your</u> Kingdom come</i>
Petition 3: <i><u>Your</u> will be done on earth as it is in heaven</i>	
The division between the address to God followed by our needs	
Petition 4: <i>Give <u>us</u> today our daily bread</i>	Petition 3: <i>Give <u>us</u> each day our daily bread</i>
Petition 5: <i>And forgive <u>us</u> our debts, as we forgive our debtors</i>	Petition 4: <i>And forgive <u>us</u> our sins for we ourselves forgive everyone in debt to us</i>
Petition 6: <i>And do not subject <u>us</u> to the final test</i>	Petition 5: <i>And do not subject <u>us</u> to the final test</i>
Petition 7: <i>but deliver <u>us</u> from the evil one</i>	
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The first series of three petitions concern God our Father and are addressed to Him in the possessive pronoun “Your” = “Your name”, “Your kingdom” and “Your will.” The first 3 petitions concern the acknowledgement and praise of God. The last 4 petitions are concerned with the needs of the men and women struggling to follow Christ in this earthly exile. Those four petitions are identified by the pronoun “us”: “give us”, “forgive us”, “do not subject us” and “deliver us.”

*Our Father* ... the right to call God “Father” in the invocation requires continual action on our part. See CCC 2784.

1. We have been created in His image but we are restored to His likeness by the grace imparted to us by the Holy Spirit, and we must respond to His grace by continual conversion in living our new life “in the Spirit.”
2. As children in the family of God, we must continue to behave as sons and daughters of our heavenly Father by showing mercy to others as He has shown mercy to us and by dying to self in order to live in Christ.

*in heaven* ... We are professing that we are the people of God, already seated “with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus” and “hidden with Christ in God” (CCC 2796; Eph 2:6); yet at the same time we are in exile, members of the Kingdom of heaven on earth, awaiting our reunion with our Savior.

*Holy be Your Name* is the primary petition of all petitions. We should first pray that God’s holy name will be sanctified everywhere—on earth, in the heavens, throughout creation in both time and space. But we also need to make it personal and relevant. Our cry should be: “Let Your name be sanctified in **my** life today!”