

"LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY!" (LUKE 11:1): THE PEDAGOGICAL AND MYSTAGOGICAL DIMENSIONS OF THE LUKAN CATECHESIS ON PRAYER

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ABSTRACT

*The disciples' request in Luke 11:1 — "Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples" — constitutes one of the most theologically charged moments in the Third Gospel, inaugurating a unit (Luke 11:1–13) that functions simultaneously as a piece of catechetical instruction and as an initiation into the filial mystery that undergirds all authentic prayer. This article examines Luke 11:1–13 as a unified literary and theological pericope, arguing that Luke constructs this section as a two-register catechesis: pedagogically, in that it transmits a concrete form of prayer, a narrative analogy commending bold petition, and a set of imperatives structuring the life of prayer; and mystagogically, in that each of these pedagogical elements opens onto and discloses a dimension of the mystery of the disciples' relation to the Father through the Son, culminating in the identification of the gift of the Holy Spirit as the ultimate content of what prayer seeks and what the Father gives. Drawing on contemporary Lukan scholarship (Fitzmyer, Green, Bovon, Crump, Plymale) and on the classical patristic treatises on prayer — principally Origen's *De Oratione*, Tertullian's *De Oratione*, Cyprian's *De Dominica Oratione*, and the relevant homilies of Cyril of Alexandria — the article argues that the Lukan catechesis on prayer is irreducible to a set of techniques or dispositions and is best understood as an introduction to the filial relationship with God that constitutes the innermost identity of the disciple and the deepest ground of the life of prayer.*

Keywords: Luke 11:1–13, Lord's Prayer, catechesis, mystagogy, Lukan theology, prayer, Holy Spirit, filiation, Origen, Cyprian;

INTRODUCTION

The disciples' request in Luke 11:1 is, among the synoptic accounts of the Lord's Prayer, entirely without parallel. Matthew situates the Lord's Prayer within the Sermon on the Mount as one element of an extended ethical-religious instruction (Matt 6:9–13), without any narrative occasion or explicit request from the disciples. Luke, by contrast, frames the prayer's transmission through a narrative scene of striking theological economy: Jesus has himself been at prayer, the disciples have been watching, and when he finishes, one of them asks: "Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples" (Luke 11:1).

This simple narrative frame carries an extraordinary amount of theological weight, and it is precisely this weight that the present article seeks to unpack. Three elements of the request are immediately significant. First, the request arises from observation: the disciple asks to be taught to pray because he has been watching Jesus pray. This means that for Luke,

the transmission of the practice of prayer passes through the witness of the praying master — not through a doctrinal lecture on the importance of prayer, but through the experience of proximity to one who prays. Second, the request is addressed to Jesus as *Kyrios* — "Lord" — the post-resurrection title that Luke uses throughout his double work for the risen Christ, lending the scene a subtly anachronistic and ecclesiological coloring: the disciples asking Jesus to teach them to pray are already, in Luke's theological vision, the community of disciples who address the risen Lord in the liturgical and catechetical context of the Church. Third, the request draws an explicit comparison with John's teaching of his own disciples, suggesting that the practice of prayer is understood as a communal and identity-forming practice — something that marks a community as itself, that distinguishes it from other communities, and that is transmitted from master to disciple as a form of initiation into the community's characteristic way of being before God.¹

It is this last dimension — prayer as initiation, as entry into a characteristic mode of existence before God rather than merely the acquisition of a technique — that introduces the mystagogical register alongside the pedagogical. The article will argue that Luke 11:1–13, read as a unified literary and theological unit, consistently operates on both registers simultaneously: it teaches the disciples *how* to pray (pedagogical) while simultaneously opening them to the *mystery* of what prayer is and of who they are in relation to the One to whom they pray (mystagogical). The two registers are not in tension; they interpenetrate, such that each pedagogical element — the form of the prayer, the parabolic analogy, the imperative triad, the concluding promise — discloses, for those with eyes to see, a dimension of the filial mystery that is both the ground and the goal of the life of prayer.

1. THE LUKAN LORD'S PRAYER: FORM, ECONOMY, AND FILIAL ADDRESS (LUKE 11:2–4)

The Lukan version of the Lord's Prayer is shorter than the Matthean (Matt 6:9–13), lacking the third petition ("your will be done on earth as it is in heaven"), the doxology ("for yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever"), and several other Matthean elaborations. This economy has been variously explained: some commentators attribute it to Luke's use of an earlier, less liturgically developed form of the prayer; others see it as a deliberate Lukan redactional choice, condensing the prayer to its essential petitions without the liturgical expansions that Matthew's community had by the time of writing already added.² For the purposes of this study, the textual-critical and tradition-historical questions, while genuine, are less important than the theological shape and function of the Lukan text as it stands. The Lukan prayer opens simply: "Father" (*Pater*). Matthew's "Our Father in heaven" (*Pater hēmōn ho en tois ouranois*) is more solemn and liturgically elaborate; Luke's single word is, by contrast, almost startlingly direct and intimate. Joachim Jeremias famously argued, in a thesis that has generated significant discussion and partial qualification, that the address *Abba* — the Aramaic term of intimate family address behind both the Matthean and

¹ On the narrative occasion of the Lord's Prayer in Luke and its contrast with the Matthean setting, see Fitzmyer, *The Gospel according to Luke X–XXIV*, Anchor Bible 28A, New York, Doubleday, 1985, p. 896–897, and François Bovon, *Luke 2: A Commentary on the Gospel of Luke 9:51–19:27*, transl. Donald S. Deer, Hermeneia, Minneapolis, Fortress Press, 2013, p. 91–93.

² The tradition-historical question is surveyed in detail in James D. G. Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 2003, p. 226–228, and Raymond E. Brown, "The Pater Noster as an Eschatological Prayer," in *New Testament Essays*, New York, Paulist Press, 1965, p. 217–253.

Lukan Greek forms — represents a distinctive feature of Jesus' own prayer and constitutes one of the most historically secure elements of the tradition, reflecting Jesus' characteristic address to God in terms of intimate filial relationship rather than the more formal religious address typical of Second Temple Jewish prayer.³

The theological significance of this address for Luke's catechesis is twofold. Pedagogically, it establishes the relational frame within which all subsequent petitions are to be understood: the one who prays addresses not a judge to be propitiated, not a distant sovereign to be formally approached, but a Father to whose care the petitioner entrusts all his or her needs. Mystagogically, however, the address *Pater* opens onto something deeper: if the disciples are taught to address God as Father with the same word that Jesus himself uses in his own prayer — the word that expresses his own unique filial relation to the Father — then their adoption of this address constitutes a participation in Jesus' own filial relationship, an introduction into the innermost identity of the one whom Luke consistently presents as the Son of God. The disciples do not merely imitate Jesus' prayer; they are incorporated, through the teaching of this address, into the filial relationship that makes Jesus' prayer what it is.⁴

Joseph Fitzmyer observes that this dimension of the Lord's Prayer becomes explicit in Paul's use of *Abba* in Romans 8:15 and Galatians 4:6, where the Spirit of adoption enables the believer to cry *Abba, Father* precisely as the expression of adopted sonship — a connection that, while belonging to a different literary context, illuminates the theological trajectory that Luke's own catechesis is already tracing in Luke 11:2–4 and will make explicit in the concluding verse of the unit (Luke 11:13).⁵ The mystagogical dimension of the address *Pater* is thus nothing less than the disclosure that the disciples, in being taught to pray, are being introduced into a participation in the Son's own relation to the Father — a mystery that exceeds and grounds every pedagogical element of the catechesis.

The three petitions that follow — "hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, give us each day our daily bread, and forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive everyone who is indebted to us, and lead us not into temptation" — maintain the same double register. Pedagogically, they provide the disciples with a structure of prayer that encompasses the full range of human need before God: worship (the hallowing of the divine name), hope (the coming of the kingdom), sustenance (daily bread), reconciliation (forgiveness of sins in the context of the disciple's own forgiveness of others), and protection (deliverance from temptation). Mystagogically, each petition is simultaneously a disclosure of the divine character of the One to whom prayer is addressed: a God whose name is to be hallowed, whose kingdom is coming, who provides daily sustenance, who forgives sins, and who protects from the powers of evil.⁶

Origen, in his *De Oratione* — the most extensive early Christian treatment of the Lord's Prayer and one of the most theologically ambitious texts of the patristic period —

³ Joachim Jeremias, *The Prayers of Jesus*, London, SCM Press, 1967, p. 11–65. For the significant qualification and partial revision of Jeremias's thesis, see James Barr, "'Abba' Isn't 'Daddy,'" *Journal of Theological Studies* 39 (1988), p. 28–47.

⁴ David Crump, *Jesus the Intercessor: Prayer and Christology in Luke-Acts*, Tübingen, Mohr Siebeck, 1992, p. 45–49, develops this point — that the disciples' adoption of Jesus' filial address constitutes a participation in his own filial relation to the Father — as a central element of Lukan Christology mediated through the prayer catechesis.

⁵ Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel according to Luke X–XXIV*, p. 902.

⁶ Joel B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, New International Commentary on the New Testament, Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1997, p. 437–441.

observes precisely this double character of the prayer's petitions: "Each word of this prayer is at once a petition and a revelation; we ask for the hallowing of the name, and in asking we learn that the name is holy; we ask for the kingdom to come, and in asking we learn that the kingdom is real and coming; we ask for our daily bread, and in asking we learn that God is a provider who knows our needs before we ask them."⁷ Origen's insight that each petition is simultaneously catechetical (it teaches something about God) and doxological (it glorifies God for what is taught) corresponds precisely to the double pedagogical-mystagogical register this article is tracing through Luke 11:1–13.

Tertullian's *De Oratione*, the earliest Latin treatise on the Lord's Prayer, similarly emphasizes the condensed richness of each petition: "In this little space, how many great things are gathered: the honor of God, the faith of man, the hope of salvation, the memorial of the Lord, the figure of the resurrection, and the fullness of all petition."⁸ Tertullian's reading of the prayer as a compendium of theological content — a catechism embedded in a prayer — captures the pedagogical register with characteristic precision, while his invocation of "the figure of the resurrection" hints at the mystagogical depth that Origen will develop more fully.

2. THE PARABLE OF THE FRIEND AT MIDNIGHT: BOLD PETITION AND ITS MYSTAGOGICAL GROUND (LUKE 11:5–8)

The parable that follows the Lord's Prayer in Luke's catechetical unit — the Friend at Midnight (Luke 11:5–8) — has already been examined in the preceding article in this series in connection with the theology of humble prayer, but its function within the present context of Luke 11:1–13 as a unified catechetical sequence requires separate consideration. Here, the parable functions not primarily as a contrast between reluctant and generous divine response (though that dimension is present), but as a pedagogical illustration of the boldness (*anaideia*, Luke 11:8) with which the disciple is expected to approach the Father in prayer.

Within the catechetical sequence of Luke 11:1–13, the parable serves as a narrative bridge between the form of prayer established in Luke 11:2–4 and the imperative structure of prayer developed in Luke 11:9–10: having been given the words of the Lord's Prayer, the disciples now need to understand the spirit in which they are to be deployed — not with the tentativeness of those who are uncertain of their welcome, but with the boldness of those who know that the Father receives them with the generosity that the human friend, though reluctant, ultimately enacts.⁹

The pedagogical function of the parable within the catechetical sequence is clear: it teaches the disciples that prayer requires a certain boldness of approach, a refusal of the timidity that might restrain petition before the divine majesty. Joel Green observes that in the context of Mediterranean honor-shame culture, the boldness required to knock on a neighbor's door at midnight — imposing upon him and his family in the middle of the night for the sake of an unexpected guest — would have struck Luke's readers as a genuine act of

⁷ Origen, *De Oratione*, XXII.1, in *Patrologia Graeca* 11, 488A; English translation in Rowan A. Greer (trans.), *Origen: An Exhortation to Martyrdom, Prayer, and Selected Works*, Classics of Western Spirituality, New York, Paulist Press, 1979, p. 104

⁸ Tertullian, *De Oratione*, I.6, in *Patrologia Latina* 1, 1254A; English translation in Ernest Evans (trans.), *Tertullian's Tract on the Prayer*, London, SPCK, 1953, p. 5.

⁹ On the structural function of the Friend at Midnight parable within Luke 11:1–13 as a unified catechetical unit, see Steven F. Plymale, *The Prayer Texts of Luke-Acts*, New York, Peter Lang, 1991, p. 53–56

social courage; Jesus' point is precisely that prayer before the Father should exhibit a comparable boldness, grounded not in presumption but in confidence in the Father's generosity.¹⁰

The mystagogical register of the parable, however, points beyond the pedagogical lesson of bold petition to the ground of that boldness: the disciples can approach the Father with *anaideia* — with shameless confidence — not because they have credentials to present, but because the one who taught them to say "Father" has already established the relational ground on which bold petition is possible. The boldness of the Christian petitioner is not the boldness of a creditor approaching a debtor, but the boldness of a child approaching a parent — and this filial boldness is itself a function of the mystery of adoption into which the teaching of the Lord's Prayer has already initiated the disciples.¹¹

Cyprian of Carthage, in his *De Dominica Oratione*, makes this connection explicit in a passage of striking theological precision: "We ought, beloved brethren, to remember and know, that when we call God Father, we ought to act as sons of God, that as we are pleased with God as our Father, so he may be pleased with us as his sons... The Prayer was given first by the Teacher; and therefore, the boldness with which we speak those words is itself the Teacher's gift, and not our own presumption."¹² Cyprian's observation that the boldness of prayer is itself a gift rather than a presumption — that the *anaideia* of the Christian petitioner is grounded in the filial relationship established by the Teacher's gift of the prayer itself — is the mystagogical complement to the parable's pedagogical commendation of bold petition.

3. ASK, SEEK, KNOCK: THE IMPERATIVE GRAMMAR OF PRAYER (LUKE 11:9–10)

The pedagogical and mystagogical dimensions of Luke's catechesis converge with particular clarity in the imperative triad of Luke 11:9–10: "And I tell you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened." The three imperatives — *aiteite* (ask), *zēteite* (seek), *krouete* (knock) — are present in both Matthew (7:7–8) and Luke, but Luke's placement of them *after* the Lord's Prayer and the parable of the Friend at Midnight, rather than within the Sermon on the Mount as in Matthew, gives them a specifically catechetical function within the context of Luke 11:1–13: they serve as the practical imperatives that translate the form of prayer (the Lord's Prayer), the spirit of prayer (the boldness commended in the parable), and the promise of divine response (the Father's generosity) into the structure of the disciple's ongoing life of prayer.¹³

Pedagogically, the triad functions as a mnemonic and structural device: it gives the disciples three complementary images for the activity of prayer — petition (*aiteō*), searching (*zēteō*), and approach (*krouō*) — each of which illuminates a different dimension of what it means to bring one's needs before God. Fitzmyer observes that the three images are not

¹⁰ Joel B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, p. 442–444.

¹¹ Kenneth E. Bailey, *Poet and Peasant and Through Peasant Eyes*, combined ed., Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1983, p. 134–138, develops the filial ground of prayer's boldness as the parable's primary theological contribution within the Lukan context.

¹² Cyprian of Carthage, *De Dominica Oratione*, VIII–IX, in *Patrologia Latina* 4, 524A; English translation in Alistair Stewart-Sykes (trans.), *Cyprian: On the Lord's Prayer*, Crestwood NY, St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2004, p. 68

¹³ On the placement of the *ask-seek-knock* logion within Luke's catechetical sequence, see I. Howard Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1978, p. 467–469

simply synonymous but reflect a genuine progression: asking is the most direct form of petition; seeking implies an active orientation of the whole person toward that which is sought; knocking implies arrival at a threshold and the decision to cross it, an act that combines boldness and trust in equal measure.¹⁴

Mystagogically, however, the triad points beyond itself to the One from whom the giving, the finding, and the opening come. The passive constructions — "it will be given," "you will find," "it will be opened" — are, in the standard interpretation of Jewish circumlocutions for divine action, divine passives (*passiva divina*), in which God is the unnamed subject of the action.¹⁵ The disciple asks; God gives. The disciple seeks; God enables the finding. The disciple knocks; God opens. The asymmetry embedded in the grammar of the imperatives — the disciple is in the active voice, but the result is in the passive — discloses the fundamental structure of prayer in Luke's theological vision: prayer is genuinely and irreducibly the disciple's act, requiring the disciple's genuine initiative and persistence; but its efficacy is entirely grounded in the divine response that it does not produce but to which it opens the disciple in readiness.

Origen, in his extended analysis of the *ask-seek-knock* logion in *De Oratione*, develops a remarkable reading in which the three imperatives correspond to three levels of the spiritual life and three degrees of the soul's orientation toward God: asking corresponds to the level of basic need and petition; seeking corresponds to the level of active pursuit of wisdom and virtue; and knocking corresponds to the level of contemplative approach to the divine mystery itself.¹⁶ While Origen's allegorical extension of the triad moves well beyond what Luke's redactional intention demonstrably includes, it nonetheless illuminates the mystagogical trajectory latent in Luke's text: the imperatives to ask, seek, and knock are not merely instructions about the mechanics of petition, but an invitation to orient the totality of the disciple's existence — in need, in pursuit, in approach — toward the God who gives, reveals, and opens.

4. THE FATHER'S GENEROSITY: THE TWO ANALOGIES AND THEIR THEOLOGICAL CLIMAX (LUKE 11:11–13)

The catechetical unit concludes with two analogical arguments (*a fortiori*) from human parental generosity to divine generosity, followed by what is arguably the most significant Lukan redactional contribution to the entire pericope: the identification of the gift of the Holy Spirit as the supreme content of what the Father gives to those who ask.

The two analogies — "What father among you, if his son asks for a fish, will instead of a fish give him a serpent; or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion?" (Luke 11:11–12) — deploy the familiar rabbinic argumentative structure of *qal wahomer* (from the lesser to the greater): if even imperfect human fathers give good gifts to their children, how much more will the heavenly Father give good gifts to those who ask him? Matthew's version of this argument (Matt 7:9–11) concludes with the generalization: "how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him?" Luke, characteristically and significantly, specifies: "how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him?" (Luke 11:13).

¹⁴ Fitzmyer, *The Gospel according to Luke X–XXIV*, p. 912–913

¹⁵ On the divine passive (*passivum divinum*) in the Synoptic tradition, see Jeremias, *The Prayers of Jesus*, p. 72–75

¹⁶ Origen, *De Oratione*, XIV.1–3, in Greer (trans.), p. 89–91

This Lukan substitution of "the Holy Spirit" for Matthew's generic "good things" is among the most theologically consequential redactional decisions in Luke 11:1–13, and it brings the entire catechetical unit to its mystagogical climax. Max Turner, in his comprehensive study of Lukan pneumatology, argues that this substitution is not a random variation but a deliberate Lukan theological statement: the Holy Spirit is, for Luke, the *summum bonum* — the supreme good, the ultimate gift — that subsumes and exceeds all particular goods for which the disciple might pray, such that to receive the Spirit is to receive the principle of all the goods that prayer seeks.¹⁷

The pedagogical register of this concluding verse is clear: it provides the disciples with the ultimate encouragement for the life of prayer by identifying the supreme gift — the Spirit — as the one that the Father is most willing and able to give. But the mystagogical register is deeper still: if the Spirit given in response to prayer is the same Spirit who is, throughout Luke-Acts, the agent of the disciples' adoption into the divine life, the one who enables them to cry "Father" with the filial confidence of Jesus himself (cf. Rom 8:15), then the conclusion of Luke 11:13 returns the catechetical unit to its starting point and reveals its deepest logic. The disciples asked to be taught to pray; they have been given the prayer by which they address God as Father; they have been taught the boldness of approach proper to this filial relationship; they have been given the imperatives that structure the life of prayer; and now, at the catechesis's conclusion, they are told that what they seek in prayer — what prayer, at its deepest level, is reaching toward — is the Spirit who is the gift of the Father's own self to the one who prays in filial trust.

Cyril of Alexandria, in his homily on Luke 11:13, reads this verse in explicitly trinitarian terms: "The Father gives the Spirit, who is the Spirit of the Son, to those who ask through the Son; and in giving the Spirit, the Father gives nothing less than himself, since the Spirit is of one essence with the Father and the Son; so that prayer, which begins with the address 'Father' and is sustained by the Son who taught it, arrives at the fullness of the Trinity in the gift of the Spirit."¹⁸ Cyril's trinitarian reading of the verse's theology — the Father giving the Spirit to those who pray through the Son — illuminates the mystagogical depth of Luke's entire catechetical unit: the catechesis on prayer that begins with the disciples watching Jesus pray and asking to be taught concludes with the disclosure that the ultimate goal and gift of prayer is nothing less than the communication of the divine life itself, in the Spirit who is the bond of the Trinity's own inner life now extended to the disciples in their adopted filiation.

5. MYSTAGOGY AS THE INNER LOGIC OF CATECHESIS: A SYNTHESIS

The analysis of Luke 11:1–13 conducted in the preceding sections enables a synthetic account of the relationship between the pedagogical and mystagogical registers that this article has been tracing throughout the pericope. The two registers are not two separate layers of a stratified text but two dimensions of a single, unified catechetical movement that begins with an external and observable request — "Lord, teach us to pray" — and concludes with the disclosure of the innermost ground and goal of prayer: the gift of the Holy Spirit as the Father's communication of the divine life to those who pray in filial trust.

¹⁷ Max Turner, *Power from on High: The Spirit in Israel's Restoration and Witness in Luke-Acts*, Sheffield, Sheffield Academic Press, 1996, p. 193–197.

¹⁸ Cyril of Alexandria, *Commentary on Luke*, Homily 79, in R. Payne Smith (trans.), *A Commentary upon the Gospel according to S. Luke*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1859, p. 351–353.

The pedagogical dimension of the catechesis operates at the level of form, structure, and practice: it gives the disciples the words of the Lord's Prayer, the disposition of bold petition commended by the parable, and the imperative structure of asking, seeking, and knocking. These pedagogical elements are genuinely necessary and genuinely sufficient for what they do: they give the disciple a real and concrete way to pray, a form through which the life of prayer can be entered and sustained. Without this pedagogical dimension, the catechesis would be a piece of mystical theology inaccessible to the ordinary disciple who needs, before anything else, to know *how* to begin.

The mystagogical dimension operates at the level of mystery, relation, and identity: it discloses, through and within the pedagogical elements, that the form of prayer transmits a relation (filiation), that the disposition of bold petition is grounded in a mystery (adoption), that the imperative triad opens onto a divine action (giving, revealing, opening), and that the supreme gift to which prayer is oriented is the communication of the divine life itself (the Holy Spirit). Without this mystagogical dimension, the catechesis would reduce to a set of religious techniques — useful, perhaps, but ultimately insufficient to capture what prayer, in Luke's theological vision, most fundamentally is.¹⁹

Steven Plymale, in his monograph on the prayer texts of Luke-Acts, observes that Luke 11:1–13 functions as the theological center of the Lukan theology of prayer, with the other major prayer texts in both volumes of Luke's work orbiting around it as their point of interpretive reference.²⁰ This observation, while perhaps overstated as a claim about narrative centrality, correctly identifies the theological density of the pericope: it is here, more than anywhere else in Luke-Acts, that the full complexity of what prayer means for Luke is most systematically and deliberately articulated.

CONCLUSION

The disciples' request in Luke 11:1 — simple, direct, and born of watching Jesus at prayer — opens a catechetical unit of extraordinary theological depth and pedagogical precision. Luke 11:1–13, read as a unified whole, is simultaneously a catechism and a mystagogy: a catechism because it provides the concrete forms, dispositions, and structures of the life of prayer; a mystagogy because each pedagogical element opens onto and discloses a dimension of the filial mystery that is the ground and goal of all authentic prayer.

The address "Father" initiates the disciple into the filial relationship of the Son with the Father. The petitions of the Lord's Prayer disclose the divine character of the One to whom they are addressed. The parable of the Friend at Midnight grounds the boldness of petition not in human presumption but in the filial confidence established by the Teacher's own gift. The imperative triad of asking, seeking, and knocking structures the disciple's entire existence as an orientation toward the divine generosity that gives, reveals, and opens. And the concluding identification of the Holy Spirit as the supreme gift toward which prayer reaches discloses that the catechesis on prayer is, at its deepest level, an initiation into the trinitarian life of God — the Father giving the Spirit to those who pray through the Son who taught them to say "Father."

¹⁹ On the relationship between catechesis and mystagogy in early Christian thought, see Enrico Mazza, *Mystagogy: A Theology of Liturgy in the Patristic Age*, transl. Matthew J. O'Connell, New York, Pueblo Publishing, 1989, p. 1–24, which provides the theoretical framework within which the present article's use of the term "mystagogy" is situated.

²⁰ Plymale, *The Prayer Texts of Luke-Acts*, p. 67

The patristic tradition — Origen and Tertullian and Cyprian in the West, Cyril of Alexandria in the East — grasped this double character of the Lukan catechesis with a theological attentiveness that the modern critical tradition, for all its methodological sophistication, has sometimes approached more cautiously. But the exegetical and redaction-critical analyses of Fitzmyer, Green, Bovon, Crump, and Turner converge, each through its own methodological route, on the same fundamental insight: that Luke 11:1–13 is not a collection of miscellaneous teachings on prayer but a single, coherent, and deliberately structured catechetical text in which teaching how to pray and initiating into the mystery of prayer are not two separate tasks but one movement, beginning with the disciples' observation of the praying Jesus and ending with the gift of the Spirit who is the Father's own life communicated to those who pray.

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