

## PRAYER

### INTRODUCTION

Luke emphasizes prayer more than any other synoptic.<sup>1</sup> He records nine prayers of Jesus, of which all but two are found in no other Gospel.<sup>2</sup> Luke associates prayer with the most important moments of Jesus' life.<sup>3</sup> Jesus prays at his baptism (3.21), and after a day of working miracles (5.15-16). Before choosing the Twelve Jesus spends the night on the mount in prayer (6.12). Before Peter's confession of faith and his first prediction of the Passion, Jesus prays alone (9.18; cf. 5.16).<sup>4</sup> Jesus goes to the Mount of the Transfiguration to pray (9.29). He prays with gladness and thanksgiving after the mission of the seventy disciples because of his Father's revelation to the little ones (10.17-21). His example leads the disciples to ask him to teach them to pray (11.1). Jesus prays during his agony on the Mount of Olives (22.39-46),<sup>5</sup> and during his Crucifixion (23.34-46).

Luke alone relates two special parables about prayer: the friend at midnight (11.5) and the unjust judge (18.1-8). He alone presents the story of the Pharisee and the Publican at prayer in the Temple (18.9-14), and states that Jesus exhorted his disciples to pray during his agony in Gethsemane (22.40).<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Greek verb "to pray" (*proseuchesthai*) occurs in the following texts which occur in the Lucan Gospel alone: 1.10; 3.23; 5.16; 6.12; 9.18; 11.1; 18.1, 10, 11; and in common texts: 6.28 = Mt 5.44; 11.2 = Mt 6.9; Lk 20.47 = Mk 12.40, Mt 23.14; 22.41 = Mt 26.36; 22.44 = Mk 14.39; in Acts: 1.24; 6.6; 8.15; 9.11; 10.9, 30; 11.5; 12.12; 13.3; 14.23; 16.25; 22.17; 28.8.

<sup>2</sup> The parallel texts of the Synoptics do not mention Jesus' prayer in the following instances:

- the baptism (3.21 = Mt 3.13 = Mk 1.9)
- The selection of the Twelve (6.12 = Mt 10.1 = Mk 3.7)
- Peter's confession of faith (9.18 = Mt 16.13 = Mk 8.27)
- the Transfiguration (9.28 = Mt 17.1 = Mk 9.2)
- before the teaching of the Lord's prayer (11.1 = Mt 6.9)
- at the Crucifixion (23.34, 46 = no parallel text)

<sup>3</sup> D. Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction* (Chicago, 1965), 86. Jesus' prayer of exaltation at the return of his disciples is found in Mt 11.25-27 and that of Gethsemane occurs in all the Synoptics.

<sup>4</sup> A. Hastings, *Prophet and Witness in Jerusalem* (New York, 1958), 90, conjectures that it might have been to this prayer that Jesus was referring when at the Last Supper he declared "Simon, Simon . . . I have prayed for you, that your faith might not fail" (22.31-32).

<sup>5</sup> E. Rascio, *Synopticonum Quaestiones Exegeticae* (Rome, 1965-66), 205-230, presents an excellent study of this prayer as well as a fine bibliography.

<sup>6</sup> H. Conzelmann, *The Theology of St. Luke*, tr. G. Buswell (New York, 1967), 180, states that the Baptism, the Transfiguration and the Agony in the Garden are three scenes which mark the main stages of Jesus' ministry and that they are assimilated to one another. On each of these three occasions a divine revelation is depicted as the answer to prayer. W. C. Robinson, *The Way of the Lord* (Dissertation for Univ. of

*Infancy Narrative*

The Holy Spirit, who was fully and actively present at the conception of Jesus, descends upon all those who are intimately associated with his coming.<sup>7</sup> The Spirit inspires the jubilant prayers of Zachary, Mary, Elizabeth and Simeon.<sup>8</sup> Insight into the Holy Spirit's saving activity leads the protagonists of the Infancy Narrative to prayer and thanksgiving.<sup>9</sup>

## THE BAPTISM OF JESUS

From the moment of his conception (1.35), the whole of Jesus' life is characterized by an intimate union with the Holy Spirit which is first publicly revealed at the moment of his baptism, when the Holy Spirit descends upon him. Luke emphasizes the operation of the Spirit more than Mark, when describing the descent of the dove, by the insertion of the phrase "in bodily form". The messianic anointing of Jesus with the Spirit is an important aspect of the early apostolic preaching (e.g. Acts 4.26).

Luke alone of the Evangelists notes that Jesus was praying at the time of the Spirit's descent. This circumstance introduces the Lucan theme of the complementary character of prayer and the Spirit's effective action. The Spirit's effectiveness in Luke-Acts is generally associated with the prayerful attitude of his recipients.

The descent of the Spirit upon Jesus and the accompanying pronouncement of the Father, "You are my beloved Son, in you I am well pleased" (3.22), are a clear reference to Isaiah 42.1: "Behold my servant: I will uphold him; he shall judge the Gentiles." Thus, it is while praying that Jesus is revealed as the Servant of the Lord, the Messiah, and the Son of God.<sup>10</sup>

Basle, 1962), 41, notes that these three "epiphanies" introduce respectively the rejections of Nazareth, of the Samaritan village and of Jerusalem with the trial and Cross. The three rejections introduce respectively three distinct sections of Luke's work (4.16ff.; 9.51ff.; Acts).

<sup>7</sup> Cf. R. Laurentin, *Structure et théologie de Luc I-II* (Paris, 1957). The *magnalia Dei* of the Infancy Narrative are the occasion for jubilant prayer.

<sup>8</sup> A. George, "Jesus Fils de Dieu dans l'évangile selon saint Luc," *Revue Biblique* 72 (1965), 190, notes that the Spirit descends upon Mary as a source of life in much the same creative role that was his in Genesis (1.2) and in the expectation of that new creation whose principle shall be the resurrection of Jesus (1 Cor 15.45; Rom 1.4; 8.11, 23); the overshadowing of the Spirit is like that of the cloud which covered the tabernacle in the desert both to manifest and yet to conceal the divine presence.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. J. P. Audet, "L'annonce à Marie," *Revue Biblique* 63 (1956), 346-374.

<sup>10</sup> Prayer is a condition for the Spirit's effective action. Jesus promises that the heavenly Father will give the Holy Spirit to those who pray for it (11.13). Jesus' prayer at his baptism suggests that he is disposed for the Holy Spirit, and that he receives it in answer to his prayer. If the Spirit reveals that he is the Servant of the Lord, then this too may be in answer to his prayer.

Jesus' coming and manifestation inaugurates the new age, the New Israel, and the new creation. By having taken Jesus' genealogy back to Adam, and not only to Abraham as in the Matthean account, Luke suggests an association between the Spirit's creative activity in Genesis and at the baptism of Jesus.<sup>11</sup> As the Spirit moved over the waters from which came the first earth, so now the same Spirit descends on the head of the new creation as he rises from the waters of the Jordan. Jesus' prayer is, therefore, linked with the Spirit's creative action.

#### FILIAL PRAYER

All the prayers of Jesus begin with "Father" in Luke's Gospel.<sup>12</sup> This is no definitive indication of divine sonship, because every disciple must address God in prayer as "Father"; however, these prayers contribute to an understanding of Jesus' sonship.<sup>13</sup>

Five references to God as Father occur in Jesus' prayer of thanksgiving for the revelation of his Father to the little ones (10.21-22 = Matt. 11.25-27).<sup>14</sup> After having addressed God directly as "Father", Jesus refers to him as "my Father" before his disciples. His prayer proclaims the cosmic sovereignty and liberty of the Father in the accomplishment of his plan (10.21). The prayer not only reveals Jesus' unique filial relationship with God, but also his capacity for extending that relationship to his disciples (10.21-22):<sup>15</sup>

I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, for hiding these things from the learned and wise, and revealing them to the simple. Yes, Father, such was your choice. Then turning to his disciples he said; Everything is entrusted to me by my Father; and no one knows who the Son is but the Father, and who the Father is but the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

Unlike Matthew, Luke introduces this prayer with the theme of joy: "He rejoiced in the Holy Spirit" (10.21).<sup>16</sup> This is the only text in the

<sup>11</sup> A. Hastings, *Prophet and Witness*, 84.

<sup>12</sup> A. George, *art. cit.*, 203. In fact all the prayers of Jesus in all the Gospels begin with "Father", except that starting with the psalm text in Mk 15.34 (Mt 27.46). This theme appears in W. Marchel, *Abba, Père* (Rome, 1963).

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.* 204.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. H. F. D. Sparks, "The Doctrine of the Divine Fatherhood in the Gospels," in *Studies in the Gospels, Essays in Memory of R. H. Lightfoot*, ed. D. E. Nineham (Oxford, 1955), 246-247.

<sup>15</sup> Studies of the revelatory character of Jesus' prayer in Lk 10.21-22 are: A. Feuillet, "Jésus et la Sagesse divine d'après les évangiles synoptiques," *Revue Biblique* 62 (1955), 161-196; H. Mertens, "L'hymne de jubilation chez les synoptiques (Grenbloux, 1957); W. Marchel, *Abba, Père* (Rome, 1963), 147-177.

<sup>16</sup> A. George, *art. cit.*, 195, affirms the messianic character of this revelation and of the disciples' joy which distinguishes the Lucan version from that of Matthew. Jesus invites his disciples to rejoice that their names are written in heaven (10.17-20); he congratulates them for having received the grace to see what the prophets and kings of the Old Testament had longed for (vv. 23-24). In Matthew's account the text has a

Gospel where we read of Jesus' rejoicing. His joy is analogous to that of Mary and Elizabeth who rejoice because of their insight into and participation in God's effective plan of salvation (1.14,47). In both cases joy is associated with the Holy Spirit.

The prayers and words of Jesus about his Father are remarkably original in the Lucan account. Their appearance at the beginning and end of the Gospel indicates their importance, as well as Luke's particular interest in the sonship of Jesus as a unique relationship which is especially revealed in his prayers (10.21; 23.34, 46).

In prayer Jesus is closest to the Holy Spirit and to his Father (10.21-22). At such times, he leaves his disciples and remains alone with God. His are not only prayers of petition but also of union.<sup>17</sup> Although Jesus is apparently solitary in prayer, it is then that he is actually in the society of his equals.<sup>18</sup> Prayer is the most divine of his activities in the sense that it shows him as the equal of the Father, the beloved Son.

#### THE TRANSFIGURATION

Jesus' public ministry begins with the prayer of the Jordan and closes with the prayer of the Cross (23.46). The Transfiguration, which occurs in the middle of the public ministry, is a moment of intense prayer when the glory of Jesus is revealed as at once that of the beloved Son and of the prophet to whom all must listen. Seldom does Jesus appear nearer to his Father than in this manifestation of his glory. As the Father's beloved Son he wholly transcends Moses and Elias in his union with God.<sup>19</sup>

The glory of the Mount of the Transfiguration and the agony of the Mount of Olives bracket the redemptive work of Jesus with two mysterious moments of intense prayer in which Luke presents Jesus as fully human and fully divine. As human, Jesus could be a prophet, could be filled with the Spirit, could be encouraged by an angel and could feel the need of prayer; as the Son of God, Jesus could send the Spirit, could be transfigured, and could speak as an equal of the Father.

controversial character because of its context in which Jesus speaks against the cities unmoved by his miracles (11.20-24), and against the Pharisees (12.1-14).

The Lucan insertion, "He rejoiced in the Holy Spirit," possibly refers to the charismatic prayer Luke knew in the Church (Acts 10.46; Rom. 8.26-27; Eph. 6.18), and whose origins were to be found in the prayer of Jesus. Thus, the prayer of the Church is that of Jesus and likewise reveals the Father in the joyful expression of gratitude for the accomplishment of his salvation plan in Jesus.

<sup>7</sup> A. Hastings, *Prophet and Witness*, 88.

<sup>8</sup> S. Garofalo, "La Preghiera solitaria di Gesù, *Euntes Docete* (1955), esp. 166-169.

<sup>9</sup> A. Hastings, *Prophet and Witness*, 90, 95.

## JESUS' TEACHING ON PRAYER

The two exclusively Lucan parables about prayer, the friend at midnight (11.5) and the unjust judge (18.1-8), encourage persistence and confidence in prayer. The exclusively Lucan story of the Pharisee and the Publican at prayer in the Temple (18.9-14) is an instruction on the proper spirit of prayer, teaching that man has no claims on God. Prayer with a humble and contrite heart, and not self-righteousness, is pleasing to God.

## PRAYER AT GETHSEMANE

Luke alone affirms that Jesus exhorted his disciples to pray during his agony at Gethsemane (22.40). This pericope has been linked with that of the Temptation (4.13-22.3) on the assumption that both pericopes depict Jesus as the model of human victory over temptations.<sup>20</sup> Jesus appears as the new Adam, the prototype of every Christian in temptation and in victory over it.<sup>21</sup> Luke, in these parallel pericopes, instructs Christians to pray in temptation. However, despite the genuine parallelism between the situations of Christ and Adam confronting temptation, there is no evidence in the text which proves that Luke had this in mind.<sup>22</sup>

## THE CRUCIFIXION

Jesus utters two prayers at his Crucifixion which are found in the Lucan account alone. The first is the prayer in which Jesus intercedes for those who are responsible for his death (23.34): "Father, forgive them; they know not what they do". The prayer of the Son expresses the infinite mercy of the Father, so often affirmed by Luke. It verifies the words of Jesus: "Love your enemies" (6.35). Stephen echoes these words during his martyrdom (Acts 7.60); and the apostles also exonerate the people of Jerusalem and their leaders because they had acted in ignorance (Acts 3.17; 13.27).

The second prayer is a citation of Ps. 31.5: "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit" (23.46). This text does not correspond with its counterpart in the other Synoptics which cite Ps. 22.1. The Greek words

<sup>20</sup> E. Rasco, *Synopticonum*, 228, notes that Jesus, as once the people of God, is comforted by an angel in time of crisis. In the Old Testament tradition God cared for his people through angels. The angel on the Mount of Olives serves as the representative of the new people of God in a gesture analogous to that of the angel at the Temptation and to those mentioned in the Epistle to the Hebrews (1.6). Cf. H. Aschermann, "Zum Agoniegebet Jesu, Lk 22. 43-44," *Theologia Viatorum* 5 (1953-54), 145 and n. 8.

<sup>21</sup> A. Feuillet, "Le recit Lucannienne de la tentation (Lc. 4. 1-13)," *Biblica* 40 (1959), 613.

<sup>22</sup> I. de la Potterie, *Excerpta Exegetica Ex Evangelio Sancti Lucae*, class notes mimeographed (Rome 1963-64), 115.

of the Lucan text suggest the writer's familiarity with the parallels, at least in their source; nevertheless, he quotes Ps. 31.5, the traditional evening prayer of Judaism which Jesus certainly would have known. This prayer expresses the confidence of the Jews in God who would guard their lives from peril. Thus, Luke has Jesus speak of his Father in both his first (2.49) and last words (23.46).

#### THE PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

In the Book of Acts Luke shows the correspondence of the Church's prayer life with that of Jesus. Like Jesus at his baptism, the disciples are gathered in prayer before the descent of the Holy Spirit (1.14). They pray with confidence because their prayer is united with the efficacious prayer of their risen Lord who had commanded them to pray (21.36) and had assured them that their heavenly Father would give them the Holy Spirit (11.13; Acts 1.8). The Lucan Gospel teaches that Jesus' prayers are always answered: he receives the Holy Spirit at his baptism (3.22); he receives the Twelve after his night of prayer (9.20); he receives Peter's confession of faith after his prayer (9.20); his glorification at the Transfiguration follows upon his prayer (9.29); the disciples learn to pray the Lord's Prayer after his prayer (11.1); Peter repents (22.62) because Jesus has prayed that his faith would not fail (22.32); the apostles preach the forgiveness of sins to the people of Jerusalem (Acts 2.38, etc.) which Jesus had requested of his Father at the Crucifixion (23.46). Luke implies that what follows upon Jesus' prayer is the answer to his prayer and the sign of its efficacy.

While at prayer the disciples receive the Spirit which empowers them to speak the word of God with great courage and impact (2.42; 4.31). Prayer is the special obligation of the Twelve (6.4). It accompanies the ordination of the Church's ministers and the commissioning of its missionary preachers (6.6; 13.3; 14.23). Through prayer and the imposition of hands the Samaritans receive the Spirit (8.15, 17). Prayer precedes the miracles of the apostles (9.40; 28.8). Through prayer are communicated the divine power, inspiration and guidance of the Holy Spirit.

In the life of the early Church prayer is associated with the reception of revelations through dreams and angelic visitations (9.11; 10.4; 12.5), which Luke indicates are related to the activity of the Holy Spirit.<sup>23</sup>

Because prayer enables men to become subject to the dynamic influence of the Holy Spirit, Luke regards the gift of the Spirit as the

<sup>23</sup> G. W. H. Lampe, "The Holy Spirit in the Writings of St. Luke," in *Studies in the Gospels* (Oxford, 1955), 169-170.

answer to "prayer" (Luke 11.13). The Christian community carried on the constant prayer of Jesus, according to his command (Luke 21.36). Like Jesus, it prayed above all at the decisive moments of its life. Peter and John, after having been released by the chief priests, return to their people and pray; all are filled with the Holy Spirit and speak the word of God with confidence (Acts 4.23-31). Prayer also preceded the election of Matthias (1.15).

The Spirit, known as the "Spirit of Jesus" (16.7), is the gift which enabled Christians to share his character and witness to him. Jesus had promised that his gift of the Spirit would make them his witnesses (1.8). The prophets had also given witness to Christ (10.43). Through his Spirit, Jesus transmits his own prophetic power to bear witness to the fulfilment of the divine promises (4.33), and to perform the same signs which he had performed.

#### PRaise AND BLESSING

The prayer of praise occurs more frequently in Lucan writings than in the rest of the New Testament together. This prayer is expressed by three main words.<sup>24</sup>

*Ainein*, "to praise", is used of the angels (2.13), of the shepherds (2.20), and of the crowds when Jesus rode into Jerusalem in triumph (19.37).

*Doxazein*, "to glorify", is used of the shepherds (2.20), of the paralyzed man after he has been healed (5.25, 26). Others who "glorify" God are the people of Naim (7.16), the bent woman (13.13), the grateful beggar (17.15), the blind man who has received his sight (18.43).

*Eulogein*, "to bless", is used of Zachary after his cure (1.64) and of Simeon when he saw the infant Jesus (2.28). It describes the activity of the disciples in the Temple after the Ascension of Jesus (24.53). Zachary declares that the Lord who has delivered his people is *eulogetos*; Mary is called *eulogemene* by Elizabeth (1.68, 42). God blesses men and men bless God. All semitic peoples believed that the gods blessed them; however, only the Hebrews blessed God. R. Meir estimates that the faithful Jew pronounced one-hundred blessings upon God daily.<sup>25</sup>

The Exile and Restoration reminded the People of God of their complete dependence upon God and his promises. They realized that their

<sup>24</sup> W. Barclay, *The First Three Gospels* (Philadelphia, 1966), 293, notes that the phrase "praising God" occurs oftener in Luke's writings than in all the rest of the New Testament together. Luke's Gospel begins and ends with people praising God in the Temple (1.9; 24.53).

<sup>25</sup> Cf. E. J. Bickerman, "Bénédiction et prière," *Revue Biblique* 69 (1962), 524. Most of the Jewish background for understanding the concept of blessings and prayer in Luke's Gospel is taken from this article.

infidelity was matched only by God's fidelity (Neh. 9.33). They reminded God of his blessings in order that He repeat them.<sup>26</sup> The prayer of Esdras (Neh. 9) summarizes sacred history: the favours of God are enumerated from Abel to Judith, from Esther to the Macchabees. The blessing declared the favours of God and appealed to his fidelity. His past blessings were interpreted as his gracious and gratuitous commitment to the future of his people.

After the Exile, the blessing becomes the preface to a petition (1 Kings 8.56), introducing a series of reasons for praising God and concluding with a request.<sup>27</sup> In the Septuagint the word *eulogein* means "to speak well of", to glorify God by declaring and praising his wonderful works with the confidence that he will remain eternally faithful to his people who can survive only in virtue of his continued blessings.<sup>28</sup> The Jews were taught to bless God both for good and bad fortune.

The Jews blessed God before their prayer, or request (*proseuche*).<sup>29</sup> Thus, thanksgiving for what God had already done preceded the prayer for his present assistance. The blessing is a grateful commemoration; the prayer which follows is a hopeful petition.

The Emmaus account combines the declarative aspect of the traditional Jewish blessing with the eucharistic prayer.<sup>30</sup> Christ's recollection of God's great works and past favours corresponds to Israel's blessing of God; the self-revelation of Christ in the consequent blessing and breaking of the bread corresponds to God's blessing of the New Israel.<sup>31</sup> The blessing of the bread before the disciples at Emmaus (24.30) occurs in a eucharistic, joyous context of Christ's self-revelation, after his interpretation for them of everything in the Scriptures referring to himself (24.27). Christ's remembering forms an integral part of an action which terminates in the blessing and breaking of the bread.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 530.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 531.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 529.

<sup>30</sup> J. A. Grassi, "Emmaus Revisited (Luke 24, 13-35 and Acts 8.26-40)," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 26 (1964), 463-464, cites a passage from R. Orlett, "An Influence of the Early Liturgy Upon the Emmaus Account," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 21 (1959), 216-217:

. . . the early Christian experienced the effects of both the Holy Spirit and of the Eucharist above all during their liturgical gatherings. Thus, for those Christians who had never seen Jesus alive on earth, the experience of the two disciples epitomizes what they experienced at these early liturgical meetings from the readings and explanations of the Scriptures, and from the agape, climaxed, as it was by the celebration of the Eucharist.

<sup>31</sup> J. A. Grassi, *art. cit.*, 467, asserts that the Emmaus account represents Christ manifesting himself to those who receive him with hospitality and listen with faith to his word in the explanation of the Scriptures; this occurs especially in the eucharistic celebration of the liturgy.



In the worship of the early Church eucharistic prayer is accompanied by the joyful praising and thanking of God (Acts 2.47). Just as the Jewish blessing looked to the past and Jewish prayers looked to the future, the Church's eucharistic worship was both commemorative and eschatological: "As often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes" (1 Cor. 11.26).<sup>32</sup> The Church blesses God for the redemptive Passion, death, and Resurrection of Christ, which constitute God's continuing blessing of the Church and the basis of its eschatological hope.<sup>33</sup>

The verb "to give thanks" (*eucharistein*) is synonymous with "to bless" (*eulogein*).<sup>34</sup> It is found in the account of the Last Supper (Matt. 15.36; Mk. 14.23; Luke 22.17, 19; 1 Cor. 11.24). Eucharistic prayer is characterized by proclamation and community. Jesus' discourse at the Last Supper ends with his intercessory prayer to the Father and with his injunctions for the life of his community in the world (22.31-38). Strife and temptation lie ahead; however, Jesus promises his disciples that he will pray for them. This is their hope. The intercessory prayer of Jesus for his community, God's new creation, preserves it for the fulfilment of its task in the world. The prayer of Jesus, preceding the selection of the Twelve (6.12 = Matt 10.1 = Mk. 3.7), is answered by the creation of the community; his intercessory prayer is answered by the Church's continued existence.

The prayer of Jesus is essentially that of the Son with his Father. It is both creative and communitarian because it is the prayer of the community of Jesus, created and preserved in virtue of the divine response to Christ's effective intercession. The Christian community is one of prayer, carrying on the constant prayer of Jesus, according to his command (21.36). Its prayer is accompanied by the Spirit which descended upon Jesus while praying at the Jordan and upon his disciples while praying in the upper room.

The continuity of the Spirit's presence during the prayers of Jesus and those of his disciples is in each case characterized by the creative opening of a ministry which inaugurates a new age, a new Israel, and a new creation.<sup>35</sup> The mission of the New Israel, like that of its Lord, is achieved in prayerful responsiveness to the same Holy Spirit. Thus,

<sup>32</sup> H. Flender, *St. Luke Theologian of Redemptive History*, tr. R. H. and I. Fuller (London, 1967), 80-84, treats the table scenes in Luke, underscoring their eschatological, christological and soteriological aspects.

<sup>33</sup> W. C. Robinson, *The Way*, 114-117, treats of history and eschatology in Luke, presenting the polarity of the past and future in the life of the Church.

<sup>34</sup> M. H. Shepherd, "Eucharist" in *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, II (New York, 1962), 179.

<sup>35</sup> H. Flender, *St. Luke*, 83.

the risen Christ continues his work of salvation through the gift of his Spirit to his disciples.<sup>36</sup>

The eucharistic prayer of Jesus is that of his Church. It combines the elements of the traditional Jewish blessing and petition, of the past and the future, of proclamation and invocation, of eucharistic thanksgiving and praise for the wonderful works which God has done and of eschatological hope and petition for their final accomplishment. Thus, Luke begins and ends his Gospel with prayers of rejoicing at God's wonderful saving deeds (1.47; 24.52, 53). With the spirit of eucharistic joy and confidence in the intercessory prayer of their risen Lord, the disciples embark on their mission to the ends of the earth.

#### CONCLUSION

The mission of Jesus is accomplished in a spirit of filial dependence on God, which is expressed in prayer.<sup>37</sup> Discipleship requires that union with God which Jesus manifested in his prayer; and this must be learned from Jesus himself (11.1).<sup>38</sup> Jesus' precepts on prayer imply that we must pray to the Father because He is good and will give us the Holy Spirit, the fulness of His gifts (11.9-30) and the source of Christian joy (10.21).<sup>39</sup> The gracious acceptance of the Father's gifts characterizes the openness to God expressed by prayer; this includes the acceptance of the Father's will, the cause of Christian joy,<sup>40</sup> which

<sup>36</sup> H. Flender, *St. Luke*, 84.

<sup>37</sup> Cf. L. Legrand, "L'arrière-plan néotestamentaire de Lc. 1.35," *Revue Biblique* 70 (1963), 179. The same Spirit that overshadowed Mary, and through whom she brought forth her son, is called "The Spirit of the Son" which cries out from within us "Abba, Father", an echo of the preferred prayer of Jesus (Lk. 9.2; 23.34, 46; Mk. 14.36; Matt. 9.25).

<sup>38</sup> Cf. M. Zerwick, "Oratio Dominica," *Verbum Domini* 28 (1950), 176-180, affirms that this prayer implies the recognition of God by reasoning, loving creatures in faith and charity, in word and works. Such recognition constitutes the Kingdom of God and his glory, which are identical with our happiness. We are created for that profound joy which expresses the loving will of God for our sanctification in Christ. Prayer, as Christ taught it, expresses the loving recognition of God as source of our peace and joy. To share in the peace and joy which exist first in God is to enter into his kingdom of heaven.

<sup>39</sup> Cf. M. Zerwick, "Perseverante Orare (11. 5-13)," *Verbum Domini*, 28 (1950), 243-247, states that living according to the word of God means living by what it says and the spirit it expresses. If it says "Pray", I pray; if it says "Trust", I trust. The Word promises to give more than man imagines: God Himself. Luke says the Holy Spirit (11. 13). All genuine prayer seeks God himself, his own best gift. Its efficacy is assured if we pray for the will of God, for that love which is His. For all those who love God, all things are seen as a grace and understood in terms of his love and saving perspective. Prayer enables our openness to seeing all His way.

<sup>40</sup> Cf. M. Zerwick, "Exultatio Domini (10.21-22)," *Verbum Domini* 26 (1948), 229-233, notes that the Father's will, his love for the little ones, is Jesus' joy. Jesus receives joy as a gift from the Father and rejoices with the Father in virtue of it. Only the Father's gift, associated with the Spirit, causes Christian joy. The Father's joy becomes that of Jesus; and the joy of the Father and of Jesus is that of all Christians.

caused Jesus to rejoice in prayer (10.21-22).<sup>41</sup> Jesus and his Father sanctify with joy. Jesus points the way to a higher joy when he tells his disciples to rejoice that their names are written in heaven (10.20), in their communion with God, rather than in their power to cast out devils.<sup>42</sup>

Prayer is the basis for hope in the struggle which leads to peace and joy for some and to eternal unrest for others (10.17-20).<sup>43</sup> It guarantees victory over temptation (22.46).<sup>44</sup> Jesus' victory over temptation (4.3, 9) is the unique work of the Son of God, whose prayer and example enable Christians to overcome temptation in their own lives.<sup>45</sup> The kingdom of God does not come without a struggle; and prayer overcomes the obstacles to the benevolent reign of God.<sup>46</sup> Consequently, the early Church had a special interest in the prayers of Jesus:

The earliest church always appreciated the historical side of its exalted Lord, the time and the circumstances of his earthly life. The gospel narratives leave no doubt about this. Nothing could be more historical, real or earthly than the way Jesus prays in the synoptics.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Cf. M. Zerwick, "Diliges Deum Tuum ex Toto Corde Tuo (19.25-29)," *Verbum Domini* 26 (1948), 365-369, affirms that Jesus commands us to love and to rejoice in and with the Lord. Dependence upon God, which characterizes the religious man, means dependence upon Him for our love and joy: we love and rejoice in what He loves and enjoys. He loves our existence, the result of His creative loving and divine concern. Thus, in accepting ourselves and our need for salvation in Jesus, we can share in God's joy and love.

<sup>42</sup> Cf. M. Zerwick, "Vidi Satanam Sicut Fulgur de Caelo Cadentem (10.17-20)," *Verbum Domini* 26 (1948), 110-113, notes the warfare between the creator and anti-creator, between peace and unrest, between joy and unhappiness. Jesus can point the way to a higher joy because he was with God from the beginning of creation and can explain what lies at the heart of this conflict. Just as the Creator saw Satan fall, so too he knows whose names are written in heaven.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. M. Zerwick, "In Beelzebub, principe Daemoniorum (11, 14-28)," *Verbum Domini* 29 (1951), 44-48, comments that Jesus provokes diverse responses. Admiration for his work and character is one from which much good originates. Sin is the abuse of our minds and hearts, the ultimate abuse of our humanity, in rejecting the traces of God's wisdom and love in our lives. It is the blackout of the soul confronting the Light of the World.

<sup>44</sup> H. Flender, *St. Luke*, 55.

<sup>45</sup> Cf. J. Jeremias, *TWNT*, I, 141, cited in H. Flender, *St. Luke*, 55, n.2.

<sup>46</sup> Cf. A. Salas, *Discurso Escatologico Prelucano: Estudio de Lc. XXI, 20-36* (Monasterio-Escorial, 1967), 95-117 treats of the theology of destruction in the Third Gospel and affords background material for the concept of the Christian struggle.

<sup>47</sup> H. Greeven, *Gebet und Eschatologie im NT* (Berlin, 1931), 11.