

An Address for the Wedding of Catharine Meyer and Charles Bailey
September 9, 2006
Chapel of St. Timothy and St. Titus, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri

Held in the Hands of Prayer

The Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:9-13)

When you were little we were able to hold you in our arms. I recall how pleased I was when I discovered that when you were in your footie pajamas I could just pick you up like a sack and carry you. Well, that gave way to hugs and now you'll be off to live your life and we can't hold you as we used to. **Now as never before we will hold you in the hands of prayer.** Sometimes it's hard to know what to pray for another person. Are we praying for something that is proper and pleasing to God? So let me share with you are prayer that is proper and pleasing because it comes from God Himself. **This is the prayer we will pray for you.**

Our Father who art in heaven. Our *Father*, not "my Father" or "your Father;" not Charles' Father or Katie's Father but *Our Father*. We're all in this together. *Our Father* means that we can pray this for one another. We can pray the Lord's Prayer as an intercessory prayer. We can pray this prayer with someone in mind other than ourselves. We will pray for someone else, we will pray for you, to our Father in heaven. "In heaven" indicates that He can do far more than any earthly Father, far more abundantly than all we ask or think.

When we pray the Our Father for you, **we will pray that hallow His Name.** His Name does not refer to what we call Him, as we call each other by name. His Name means all that He has revealed to us about Himself, that He is Triune, that He is our Creator, Redeemer and Sanctifier, and all that we speak in the Creed. We will pray that you treasure in your minds and hearts all that God has revealed. Then you will keep His Name holy.

When we pray the Our Father for you, **we will pray that His Kingdom will come into your hearts and home.** God's Kingdom is wherever He rules. He rules all things with His power. We will pray that He rule your hearts and minds with His grace, with the undeserved love He shows us in Jesus Christ. Then His kingdom will come.

When we pray the Our Father for you, **we will pray that His will be done on earth as it is in heaven.** The key here is "on earth." God gets His way, His will in heaven. Do we live by His will here on earth? Do we treasure His Word and grow in grace? Jesus prayed, *Not my will but Thine be done.* We will pray that for you.

When we pray the Our Father for you, **we will pray that He give you daily bread.** Here we are not only praying for a slice of bread but for all the material things you need in life, for home and health, for work and wealth... Well, at least enough money to get by. We don't want you to forget that all material blessings come ultimately from God.

When we pray the Our Father for you, we will pray ***Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.*** The most glorious thing about the Name of God, about His revelation to us, is that He forgives our sins. That has been accomplished through the death of Jesus Christ and validated by God in Christ's resurrection. God now asks us to forgive one another and you will have ample opportunity in marriage to do that. If you don't forgive one another, you will build up resentment and bitterness that will be poison to your relationship.

When we pray the Our Father for you, **we will pray that you not be led into temptation.** Martin Luther explains this petition in this way: *God tempts no one. We pray in this petition that God would guard and keep us so that the devil, the world, and our sinful nature may not deceive us or mislead us into false belief, despair, and other great shame and vice. Although we are attacked by these things,, we pray that we may finally overcome them and win the victory.*

When we pray the Our Father for you, **we will pray that The Father in heaven will deliver you from evil,** from every evil that will come your way and in the end take you both to be with Him in all the joys of heaven won for us by our Savior. That leads us to say ***Amen.*** With confidence in the great power and grace of God, we know that our prayers for you will be answered.

We will hold you in the hands of prayer. We will pray all these petitions for you. **In several minutes when we all pray the Lord's Prayer, I will put my hands on your heads to symbolize that we are praying this prayer for you.** We can't pick you up by your diaper any more and the hugs of necessity will be fewer but what will be is better. We will hold you in the hands of prayer. Amen.