

Oct. 2, 2011
First Parish UCC, Brunswick, ME
Mary E. Beard

Roots & Horizons: Sharing Bread

Just after Christmas this last year, my husband Ron, our daughter Lauren and I traveled to visit our daughter Karin who was studying in Spain. People often ask me where she was in Spain. The easiest way to explain it this - If you went down to Popham beach and got on a boat and went due east you would come to Spain on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean. Then you would have to go inland about an hour by car and you would come to the city where she was. It's called Santiago de Compostela. In English that means St. James of the field of stars.

The city is built around a church that has been there for hundreds and hundreds of years, since the 9th century. Today it is a large Catholic cathedral, which is much bigger than our sanctuary. While we were there we went to worship at the cathedral. I didn't understand much of what was said, since the service was in Spanish and my Spanish is basically non-existent. However, there was one thing in the service I recognized. I've asked David Belleville, who spent part of his childhood in Mexico City, to share those words with us today.

(David says Lord's Prayer in Spanish.)

It's the Lord's Prayer. There is a rhythm to it that we recognize no matter where we are in the world, no matter what language is spoken. This will be part of

services around the world today.

The Lord's Prayer is one of the deep roots of our tradition. Adults know it by heart, yet for children some of the words are quite unfamiliar.

For instance, one little girl after church school was all excited to tell her parents that she had learned God's name. "What is it?" they asked. "Harold," she replied. They looked puzzled. So she said, "You know. Our Father, who art in heaven, Harold is his name." She didn't know the word hallowed. It sounded like Harold. I like her creativity. Actually, hallowed means "holy." Holy is God's name. You might recognize hallowed as part of a festival that comes at the end of this month – Halloween. Halloween means, "All hallows eve" because it is night before All Saints Day.

Some traditions use the word trespasses instead of debts. One little boy couldn't quite figure out that word, so he said, "forgive us our trashcans." He knew it was something he didn't want to have too much to do with.

Another little girl struggled with the last word of the main part of the prayer. She had been practicing the prayer each night with her mother. Then one night she told her mother she wanted to do it on her own. When she got near the end she said, "Deliver us some email." Thankfully this little girl didn't know

much about evil, but it sounded like email, and she knew that was delivered. When we are first learning this prayer some of the words can be confusing. Then when we know it by heart we often pay little or no attention to the words at all. But there is one word in the prayer that I want to lift up today. It is a simple little three-letter word. In fact it is the first word of the prayer. It is the word OUR.

This is not my prayer. It is not Pastor Geoff's prayer. It is our prayer, to OUR God. That means when we say this prayer we are including all the people here. In fact we are including all the people all around the world who are gathering for worship today. In fact, we are including all the people of the world since we believe that all people are God's children. When we enter into this prayer, all people are there with us, even those we may not like very much.

This prayer is a deep root that also calls us to look up at the horizon – to see where we are going as a people of faith. It is a prayer that embodies the great commandment of Jesus – to love God, and to love neighbor. The first part of the prayer is about loving God and the second is about loving neighbor, including ourselves.

One of the lines about our neighbors and ourselves is the part that says, "Give us this day our daily bread."

We pray for and work for daily bread for each of us, but we also pray for and work for daily bread for those who have no bread, no food.

This fall we are going to be part of a special project in collecting food for

people right in our area who are hungry. Pastor Geoff is going to talk more about this next week, but I want you young people who are here today to know that we are going to ask you to be part of this project with us.

We have set a goal to collect 1,111 items of food during the first eleven days of November to be given to Mid Coast Hunger Prevention. We are going to ask you young people to bring food to church and church school and then to help us deliver it to Mid Coast Hunger. You will be hearing more about this, but you and your family can start making plans to be part of this project of sharing daily bread with others.

It is part of our prayer to OUR God.