

The Our Father as a Guide to Prayer

Year of the Eucharist and St. Joseph 2021

I. The “Our Father...”

- Found in Luke 11:1 and Matthew 6:9-13
- The prayer that the Lord Himself gave to the Church to teach us how to pray.
- Something that unites all Christians.
- Summary of the Whole Gospel
 - The Sermon on the Mount (Mt 5-7) is the summary of the Gospel, and the Lord’s Prayer is at the center of the Sermon.
 - St. Thomas Aquinas: everything we can rightly desire is in the prayer and in the order that we should desire it.
 - In Baptism we receive adoption as children of God, as so can call God our Father.
 - In the petitions we ask the Lord for everything we need to live a Christian life.
 - It is eschatological, looking towards the end times when all of God’s promises will be fulfilled.

II. Our Father

- We dare to call God “Father.”
- God relates to us not as servants or slaves, but as His children, not by natural generation, but by adoption.
- The desire to imitate the Father.
- It gives us a humble and trusting heart, like little children.

III. Who art in heaven

- God is both transcendent and imminent, both infinitely greater than us and very near to us.
- We are citizens of heaven.

IV. Hallowed be thy name

- Called to recognize the holiness of God’s name.
- That God’s name might be made holy in us.
- That we might treat God’s name, and therefore God Himself, with reverence.
 - YHWH means “I am Who am.”
 - Jesus means “savior.”
- That God’s name might be made holy among the nations.

V. Thy kingdom come

- The Kingdom refers to Christ Himself, as well as to His reign.
- The Kingdom refers to the Church, but primarily to Jesus’ second coming at the end of time.
- The Reign of Christ is brought about by the working of the Holy Spirit.

VI. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven

- God is sovereign; His will is always accomplished.
- In Christ, and in His death and Resurrection, God’s will has been perfectly fulfilled.

- We are asking for God to unite our wills to Christ's, to make us desire for ourselves and others what God wills for us.

VII. Give us this day our daily bread

- Trust that God will provide everything we need.
- We are called to participate in God's work in providing for the poor, i.e. the separation of the sheep and the goats in Matthew 25.
- "Man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of God. – Mt 4:4.
- Daily Bread, therefore, refers also to the Eucharist.
 - daily comes from the Greek *epiousios* = super-essential
- Finally, "this day" refers to each day and to the last day of our lives, the day of Judgment.

V. Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us

- In one sense, it is passing on the forgiveness that we have already been offered.
- In another, our petition for forgiveness will not be heard unless we forgive others.
- "For he that loveth not his brother, whom he seeth, how can he love God, whom he seeth not?" – 1 Jn 4:20
 - We close our own hearts to the love of God.
- This is the petition that the Lord emphasizes after giving the prayer in Matthew.
- The hardest of the Lord's commands, as it requires us to die to ourselves.

VI. Lead us not into temptation

- Can also be translated, "Do not let us yield to temptation."
 - God doesn't cause anyone temptation.
- In humility, we are asking not to be tested, even though we must go through the fire to be tempered.
- Discern between being tempted and consenting to temptation.
- In the desert, Christ defeated the tempter through prayer, giving us an example.

VII. But deliver us from evil

- Not an abstract evil, but the Prince of Evil, Satan, and all of the specific evils that we encounter.
- From both Moral Evils and Physical Evils.
- Not just I, but "us."

VIII. Pattern for Prayer

- Each petition builds on the last and leads to the next.
 - God is our Father who loves us and is holy, therefore we want to be part of His kingdom. If we're in His kingdom then we will do His will and desire for ourselves what He desire for us. He desires to bring us into His kingdom by giving us what we need to do His will today and to face the day of judgment, so that we can receive the mercy and love and God and share it with others. We will be tempted to sin, which is an act against love, so we ask God to free us from sin and evil.
- Everything we might pray for is contained in the Lord's prayer.
- Don't just say the words, but mean them.

Next: The Lamb of God: Old and New Testament on September 16 at 6:30 PM