



EVANGELIUM INSTITUTE

TEACHING TRUTH - INSPIRING FAITH

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Session 5: Lord, teach us to pray

Key themes:

1. The Lord's prayer
2. God's Fatherhood
3. The first four petitions of the Our Father

CCC Paragraphs: CCC 2759 - 2827

Scripture Verses: Gen 3; Lk 1:11; Lk 11: 2-4; Mt 6:9-13; Lk 24:44; Mt 5-7; Jn 17:7; Mt 6:7; 1Kings 18:26-29; Jn 6:63; Gal 4:6; Rom 8:27; 1 Pet 1:23; 1 Pet 2:1-10; 1 Jn 3:2; Col 3:4; 1 Cor 11:26; Ex 3:5; Heb 1:3 and 2:13; Eph 3:12; Heb 3:6, 4:16, 10:19; 1 Jn 2:28, 3:21, 5:14; Mt 11: 25-27; Jn 1:1; 1 Jn 1:3; Mt 18:3, 11:25; Jn 1:17; Hos 2:21-22, 6:1-6; Rev 21:7; 1 Jn 5:1; Jn 3:5; Rom 8:29; Eph 4:4-6; Act 4:43; Mt 5:23-24, 6:14-15, Jn 11:52;

Definitions:

Father: Theologically, a father is the principal one who produces of his own substance another person like himself. There is, consequently, a Father within the Trinity, who begets God the Son. But the triune God is himself spoken of as Father, with respect to the rational beings whom he made to share in his own possession of knowledge and love. Among human beings a father is the male parent of his own children and, ultimately, the ancestor of all his progeny... (Catholic Dictionary, John Hardon, SJ)

Heaven: The place and condition of perfect supernatural happiness. This happiness consists essentially in the immediate vision and love of God, and secondarily in the knowledge, love, and enjoyment of creatures. Until the final resurrection, except for Christ and his Mother, only the souls of the just are in heaven. After the last day, the just will be in heaven in body and soul. Although the same God will be seen by all and enjoyed by all, not everyone will have the same degree of happiness. The depth of beatitude will depend on the measure of God's grace with which the person dies, and this in turn will be greatly conditioned by the merits that one earns during life on earth. Heaven is eternal because it will never cease. It is continuous because its joys never stop. It is communal because the happiness is shared with the angels and saints and the company of those who were known and loved on earth.

Name: In biblical usage, not only the title by which a person is called but the term by which the person is identified. The expressions to profane (Amos 2:7), sanctify (Isaiah 29:23), praise (Isaiah 25:1), and love (Psalm 5:12) the name of YHWH all refer to God himself. In the New Testament this concept is further deepened and refined. The name of Jesus identifies his mission (Matthew 1:21), which is to redeem (Acts 10:43), to save (Acts 4:12), to confer the fullness of supernatural life (Colossians 3:17)...(Catholic Dictionary, John Hardon, SJ)

Suggested Reading List:

Pope Benedict XVI, *Jesus of Nazareth* (New York: Doubleday, 2007), 128 – 168.
Devin Schadt, *Show us the Father* (Lakewood, CO: Totus Tuus Press, 2016).

Explaining The Seven Petitions Of The Our Father¹

Posted By: Site Administrator [0 Comment](#) [Mass](#), [Our Father](#)

Why do we pray the Our Father each week?

One of the most frequently prayed prayers among Catholics and Christians of other denominations is the Our Father. For most Christians, it is one of the first prayers that everyone learns from a young age. One of the main reasons it holds primacy in our faith and is prayed each week in the liturgy is that Jesus himself taught us the prayer. When asked by his disciples about how to pray, Jesus taught his disciples the prayer traditionally known as the “Our Father” or “the Lord’s Prayer.” This prayer appears in Matthew 6:9-13 and Luke 11:2-4.

Is there a particular structure to the Our Father?

After the initial address to the Father, the prayer itself is composed of seven petitions. There are three “thy-petitions” (thy name, thy kingdom, thy will) followed by four “us-petitions” (give us, forgive us, lead us not and deliver us). In order to better understand the Lord’s Prayer, it is important to briefly examine each petition.

“Our Father, who art in heaven...”

When Jesus taught his disciples to pray, he did not teach them to pray “My Father,” but rather “Our Father.” This reminds us that we are God’s sons and daughters together in Christ, not as isolated individuals. It is only as the body of Christ that we can pray to God as Father. When we call God “Father,” it is a reminder for us to live as children in relation with God. In teaching us to call God “Father,” Jesus also tells us that we have the privilege to call God by the same name he used in his intimate relationship with the Father.

“Hallowed be *thy* name...”

In the first petition, we are asking that God’s name would be “hallowed” or sanctified. Objectively speaking, God’s name is already holy, but the prayer is asking that God make his name holy to all people through his works and deeds. (See Ezekiel 36:22-27.)

“*Thy* kingdom come...”

The second petition has a twofold meaning. First, we are praying for the coming of the kingdom of God here and now in our everyday lives. At the same time, we are also praying for Christ’s glorious return at the end of time and the final coming of the reign of God.

“*Thy* will be done, on earth as it is in heaven...”

The third petition asks God that our will be conformed to his divine will. When Jesus was praying to the Father in the Garden of Gethsemane, he also used the words “thy will be done.” When we pray “thy will be done” we commit ourselves to following Jesus by taking up our cross.

“Give *us* this day, our daily bread...”

In the fourth petition, “give us” expresses our trust in our heavenly Father. “Our daily bread” refers to our earthly nourishment that is necessary to physically sustain us throughout the day and the Bread of Life (the Word of God and the Body of Christ) that spiritually nourishes us. As Catholics, we are privileged to receive the “Bread of Life” daily in the Mass.

“Forgive *us* our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against *us*...”

In the fifth petition, we beg for God’s mercy for the times that we have fallen short of loving God and loving our neighbor. We acknowledge that the Father’s mercy and forgiveness are able to penetrate our hearts to the extent that we are able to forgive our enemies.

¹ <https://clarionherald.org/2012/03/27/explaining-the-seven-petitions-of-the-our-father/>, accessed Feb. 4, 2020.

“Lead us not into temptation...”

Some people wonder why we would ask God not to lead us into temptation. The letter of St. James clearly says that God does not tempt us with evil (James 1:13). Therefore, in this petition, we are asking that God does not allow us to take the path that leads to sin. We are praying to avoid the near occasion of sin.

“But deliver us from evil...”

Closely tied to the previous prayer, in this final petition, we are asking God to protect us from evil. The Catechism teaches that the “evil” in this petition is not an abstract evil, but actually “refers to a person, Satan, the Evil One, the angel who opposes God” (CCC, 2851). While we acknowledge the reality of the devil, we place our trust in Christ and his definitive victory over evil on the cross.

“Amen!”

After praying all of these petitions, we end by affirming our belief in all that we have prayed by saying “Amen” or “So be it!”

Why do some Christians add a line at the end of the Our Father?

Some Christians pray, “For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours for ever,” immediately at the end of the Our Father. While this line was not included in the prayer recorded by the Gospels, it was included in The Didache, a first or second century writing that summarizes much of the teaching of the apostles. Catholics pray this line during the liturgy, but only after a prayer by the priest, in order to honor the tradition while also maintaining the traditional prayer included in the Gospels.

Where can I learn more about the Our Father?

To read more about the Our Father, see Pope Benedict’s 2007 book entitled “Jesus of Nazareth,” Part 1. The Holy Father devotes Chapter Five entirely to the Lord’s Prayer. For more explanation of the seven petitions, the “Catechism of the Catholic Church” has an entire section dedicated to the Our Father (CCC, 2759-2865). Much of the above information came from these two sources.

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The Lord's Prayer

1 "Beware of practicing your piety before men in order to be seen by them; for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven. 2 "Thus, when you give alms, sound no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by men. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. 3 But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, 4 so that your alms may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you. 5 "And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by men. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. 6 But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you. 7 "And in praying do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do; for they think that they will be heard for their many words. 8 Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. 9 Pray then like this: Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. 10 Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, On earth as it is in heaven. 11 Give us this day our daily bread; 12 And forgive us our debts, As we also have forgiven our debtors; 13 And lead us not into temptation, But deliver us from evil. 14 For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father also will forgive you; 15 but if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. 16 "And when you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by men. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. 17 But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, 18 that your fasting may not be seen by men but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you. 19 "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal, 20 but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. 22 "The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is sound, your whole body will be full of light; 23 but if your eye is not sound, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness! 24 "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon. 25 "Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you shall eat or what you shall drink, nor about your body, what you shall put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? 26 Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? 27 And which of you by being anxious can add one cubit to his span of life? 28 And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin; 29 yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. 30 But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O men of little faith? 31 Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' 32 For the Gentiles seek all these things; and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. 33 But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things shall be yours as well. 34 "Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Let the day's own trouble be sufficient for the day..

W.R.A.P.

WRITE

Write down the word or verse(s) that grab your attention, inspire you, bother you, or speak to your heart. (Lectio)

REFLECT

Reflect on the word or verse(s) that you have written down? What thought, word, or emotion is stirred within you? Why? What message does God have for you in this? (Meditatio)

APPLY

Apply this to your life. What is going on in your life such that this is coming to mind. Let the Lord inspire you to see how this word/verse(s) speaks into your life and circumstances in a way that makes a difference. How can you apply this message beginning today? (More Meditatio)

PRAY

Write a prayer to God, telling him of what you have experienced in this time. Try to pray from your heart about what is stirred within you. (Oratio) When you are done writing, pause, and rest in His presence, let Him love you, receive grace and strength. (Contemplatio)

Meditation and Reflection questions

Three simple steps to prayer:

Before you begin, ask the Holy Spirit to help you in your prayer, to show you the things that God wishes for you to hear.

Step one: Read the meditation. As soon as something strikes you, stop reading.

“Meditation is only the introduction, the initiation into what should become a profound contemplative communion with the indwelling Trinity.”²

Step two: Reflect or think about what struck you as long as it nourishes your soul. Talk to God about it and pay attention to the things He inspires within you. If your mind wanders, simply go back to the point that struck you or move on to another. God is not hindered by your distractions.

Step three: Before you conclude, pick one thing to remember or to do today based on your meditation – this is a resolution. By the resolution we turn our meditation into action and live the meditation all day. Choose something practical and concrete to remember or do through the day. It may be helpful to write down your resolution and keep it with you.

Consider underlining that strikes you, or write your own thoughts in the margins, etc.

Rediscover Fatherhood: The Gaze that we all desire³

“Go with the pitch. Don’t try to kill it or control it – just go with it.” My dad wasn’t a professional, but he knew how to hit a baseball. It was some of the best advice that an up-and-coming wannabe slugger could receive. Being a right-handed batter, my tendency was to take any pitch, regardless of where it was located, wrangle it, and launch it into left field – and hopefully over the left-field fence – but it never worked. I habitually attempted to corral and control the ball, making it do what I

² Thomas Dubay, *Fire Within: St. Teresa of Avila, St. John of the Cross, and the Gospel – on Prayer*, (Ignatius Press: San Francisco, 1989), 49.

³ Devin Schadt, *Show us the Father: 7 Secrets to be a father on earth like the Father in heaven* (Lakewood, CO: Totus Tuus Press, 2016), 11-14.

wanted, rather than moving with the ball and using its energy, motion, and placement to my advantage.

By high school I had learned how to “go with the pitch,” taking a ball located on the outside corner of the plate to the opposite field. I enjoyed doing it, not only because it was an effective tactic and boosted my batting average, but because it made my dad proud.

I relished driving home with dad after a good batting performance and hearing him say things like, “Dev, you got a stick. I love how you went with that pitch and scratched out that double – that’s how ya’ win games.” I craved his affirmation. It gave me strength, confidence, and delight, and it gave me hope – hope that I could really be something, that I could be great.

It was my sophomore year, early in the baseball season, when dad’s advice would be of particular importance. Our opponents’ pitcher had a cannon, and I couldn’t swing my bat fast enough to connect with his fastball. My first couple of at bats were humiliating. Later in that game, with teammates on base, I was at bat once again. This was the type of clutch moment of which I had always dreamed. It was a do-or-die moment – and unfortunately I felt as though I was dying. I was nervous, but not only nervous, I was frustrated with myself. *Why wasn’t I hitting this guy? What could I do to get my bat around quicker? What if I blow this?*

I backed up as far as legally possible within the batter’s box in order to create more distance between myself and the pitcher, hoping that those extra couple of inches would give me the advantage I needed. But after a swing and a miss, it was obvious that another tactic was needed. I reset my stance, entrenched my cleats in the sand, and waited. The pitch came in like a rocket, a little high and a little outside. Without hesitation, I knew exactly what to do: “Go with the pitch.” And so I did – and it was effective. I crushed it deep into right field. I could hardly take my eyes off the ball as I sprinted toward first base. It was my first home run – in fact, it was my only home run during the four years of my high school career.

By the time I arrived at home plate, my teammates had lifted me on their shoulders, tossing me like a salad. It was glorious – the moment of which every young ballplayer dreams. But the glory and the moment were fleeting. While I was relishing the moment, I instinctively scanned the bleachers, searching the grandstands for something – for someone. I was looking for his gaze; I was searching for him – for my dad – but he wasn’t there, he was at work; and even though I knew he wasn’t there, I nevertheless strained in hopes that I’d find his face among those cheering fans. I was looking for my dad’s approval – the attaboy, thumbs up, fist pump – telling me that he was proud of me.

It was my only home run, and I accomplished it by following his advice. How I wished that he could have seen me in that moment – that I could have had his approval – but he didn’t witness my moment of glory.

What is it about dad? Why is it that when we purchase a vehicle we want dad to be the first to see it? Why is it that after we catch the big fish we feel the need to show him photos while recounting the tale? Why is it that after landing a job, bowling a 300, or finding the woman of our dreams, we want to share our success with him? There is a deeper motivation behind these actions than “I want to make him proud.” *Why do we want to make dad proud?*

We look for his approval, for his eyes to rest on us with delight, because his gaze transmits and communicates something transcendent. Deep down, we long for

dad's gaze because we desire His gaze – the Father's gaze. We desire our father's approval because we want to be approved of by the Father. We desire to be a chosen son because we want God to choose us as His son – and not just any son, but a chosen son in whom He delights.

The desire to be approved of, delighted in, and chosen is programmed into us; it is inherent in our being, and even from our earliest years we sense this need. A couple of years ago, my daughter, Zelig then six years old, decided to put on a dance performance for the family. She had been preparing for most of the day. She chose the perfect music, her favorite dress (the purple sparkly one), and practiced her routine several times. Acknowledging the importance of the occasion, her mother, four sisters, and I gave the event, and her, serious attention and focus.

As she danced, I could not help but notice the beauty of her fair skin, the shimmer of her golden hair – in a word, her innocence. I also noticed that, as she danced, she watched her feet with attentiveness and particular care in order to ensure that they did exactly what she intended, while occasionally, momentarily, looking up to make certain that all eyes were upon her.

I also perceived something else – something that moved me more deeply than her fair skin and golden hair, even more than her innocence. When she looked to see if anyone was watching her, she consistently looked at me. Our eyes must have met over a dozen times. At first, it felt a little uncomfortable, but each time those twinkling silver-grey pools of shimmering light spoke to me, they transmitted a message that is the basis of everything important. Zelig was looking for her father's gaze. She wanted to know that I approved of her and delighted in her – that I loved her.

Zelig may have been looking for my gaze, but on a much deeper level, she was looking for the Father's gaze. I may have been scanning the bleachers for the face of my father, but in a more profound way, I was looking for my heavenly Father.

Questions for small group discussion:

Is there anything going on in your life right now that is hard or stressful? Is there something in your life that we can help with by prayer?

How is your prayer life going?

What struck you, surprised you, challenged you from today's session on the Lord's prayer?

Did anything strike from the WRAP Scripture meditation?

How might the Lord's prayer take on a deeper meaning for your life?

What is on your heart and mind after today's session on the Lord's prayer?

What is your relationship with God the Father like?

What struck you from this reading? What resonated with you? What caused you confusion? Inspired you? Touched you?

When was a time in your life when you found yourself looking to your father for approval? How does his approval or lack of affect you to this day? Does this carry over into your relationship with God? How?

When was a time that you succeeded in showing approval? Fell short?

In what areas can you challenge yourself to be a better parent, i.e. image of God, for your children? When are you at your best? Why do children tend, in general, to open up more to their mothers? What lesson can be learned from this?

In what way, positively or negatively, does this reading echo your experience with your own father?

What are your thoughts about human fathers reflecting the Heavenly Father?

How can you challenge yourself to use the Lord's name with respect?

What is your understanding of heaven? How does or doesn't this affect the way you live?

Does the Lord reign as Lord over your heart?

What do you see as God's will for your life? When has God made his will known to you?

Other thoughts? Reactions?