

## 6. The Lord's Prayer

*The Lord's Prayer is the perfect prayer of the Christian. It puts God, our Father, first. It encourages Christians to cling to God's will, to seek forgiveness, to solicit God's help in avoiding temptation and to ask for protection against evil.*

### Key terms:

<b>Prayer:</b>	A relationship of love in which we lift our minds and hearts in conversation with God.
<b>Temptation:</b>	The occasion of sin or something that, when given in to and acted upon, becomes sin.
<b>Discernment:</b>	The process of learning through prayer and counsel the will of God in one's life.
<b>Hallow:</b>	To recognise the holiness of God in mind and action.
<b>Kingdom:</b>	The spiritual realm over which God reigns as king.
<b>Amen:</b>	"So be it!"

The "Our Father" or "The Lord's Prayer" holds primacy in our faith for it is the prayer that Jesus himself taught his disciples when asked to teach them how to pray. This prayer appears in Matthew 6:9-13 and Luke 11:2-4.

### SUMMARY

- The Lord's Prayer, like the eucharistic liturgy itself, is fundamentally communal, the prayer of brothers and sisters of Jesus, people of common origin who dare to address God as "Abba."
- It looks forward to the "supper of the Lamb." The Eucharist is itself a foretaste of the eternal banquet that awaits us in the coming reign of God. The Lord's Prayer is strongly oriented to the fulfilment of all things and the coming of God's reign as we pray, "Your kingdom come" and "Save us from the time of trial."
- We pray for "daily bread." From early times, Christians connected this petition of the Lord's Prayer not only to ordinary sustenance but to the eucharistic feast. In our prayer for daily bread, we express our utter dependence on God.
- We seek and offer forgiveness. In the Eucharist we remember the Paschal Mystery of Christ, by which he has brought about reconciliation. As we prepare to approach the holy table, we express our need for forgiveness and pledge ourselves to share in the work of reconciliation.

## **Origin (Lk. 11:1-4)**

- Inspired by Jesus at prayer, a disciple asks that Jesus teach all of them how to pray.
- Jesus, Son by nature, emphasises the unity of all his followers in prayer to our common Father (Eph. 4:4-6).
- We have become the adopted children of God, and we pray to the Father as his sons and daughters.
- In the unity of the Holy Spirit we call God “Abba” with the firm hope of his desire for total intimacy for us.
- The “our”, the “us”, the “we” in the Lord’s Prayer is all-inclusive; it is the Mystical Body in prayer.
- Jesus teaches us the order of priority in prayer, and what to ask for.

## **STRUCTURE**

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).

### **The first three petitions: the Father (Jn. 12:28 and Jn. 15:8)**

- **“Hallowed be thy name”**
    - We cannot hallow God ourselves, because he IS God and is all-holy.
    - We desire that God be recognised, honoured, and loved as holy.
  - **“Thy kingdom come”**
    - We belong to God in mind, heart and soul.
    - God’s kingdom here is the Church and the Eucharist; hereafter, it is Heaven.
  - **“Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven”**
    - God’s will embodies our good, and we seek to discern his will in our lives through earnest prayer.
    - Total abandonment to the will of God is the heart of sanctity and is possible only in the Holy Spirit.
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### **The last four petitions: asking our Father for what we need (Mt. 6:25-34)**

- **“Give us this day our daily bread”**
  - Our endless needs show us our helplessness and need for God’s providential care.
  - God not only provides for our material needs, but also the Eucharist as bread for our souls. (Jn. 6:26-58)

- **“And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us”**
    - We are required to show love and mercy so that we can receive love and mercy. (Mt. 6:14-15)
    - We must forgive others even before they ask forgiveness, and we must forgive generously over and over (Rom. 5:8 and Mt. 18:21-22).
  - **“And lead us not into temptation”**
    - Knowing the evil of sin and our susceptibility to it, we ask to be spared from it.
  - **“But deliver us from evil”**
    - The greatest evil is sin, from which Jesus has ransomed us.
    - Satan is effective because we forget his existence and cunning (1Pt. 5:8-9).
  - **The Prayer that Jesus taught is a summary of the Gospels and indeed of all Scripture.**
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### **The Lord’s Prayer — Suggested Questions for Discussion:**

1. How is the Lord’s Prayer a summary of the whole Gospel?
2. What does it mean to call God, OUR FATHER? What is significant about this opening address?
3. Reflecting on the four “us” petitions (give us, forgive us, lead us not, deliver us), how do these requests compare with the requests you most often make in your prayers?
4. “Hallowed be thy name.” What does it mean to worship God as holy?
5. Why is our forgiveness of others integral to our relationship with God, Our Father?
6. How can we actively seek God’s kingdom and His will in our lives?

### **Catechesis on the Lord’s Prayer**

Pope Francis, General Audiences, 5 December 2018 through to 22 May 2019

Pope Francis, General Audience, 9 December 2020

Pope Benedict XVI, Angelus, 25 July 2010

Pope Francis – Our Father – Reflections on the Lord’s Prayer, March, 2018

## **PRAYER**

Pray the Lord's Prayer together or Psalm 23 or Psalm 51.

**or**

Gospel Reflection: Thirty Third Sunday in Ordinary Time

Year A Mt. 25:14-30

Year B Mk. 12:38-44

Year C Lk. 21:5-19

The following format will be used for all Gospel reflections:

- Read the text aloud.
- Pause for a minute's silence.
- Read the text aloud again.
- Ask everyone to pick a word or a phrase that struck them. They just say the word or phrase without comment or discussion.
- Read the text again.
- Ask those present to comment on their word or phrase. What struck them about it? Why/how is it speaking to them?
- Continue with the discussion.

The following questions may be helpful:

What does this mean to me?

How does it make me feel?

Did I find the text disturbing/hopeful/confusing?

What images of God emerge for me?

What do I think that God is saying in this text?

What impact does this have on my life?

## Scripture and Catechism Resources

### Scripture

- Ex. 16:2-16 God miraculously feeds the Israelites in the desert with manna and quail.
- Ex. 20:1-7 Worship God alone and speak his name with reverence.
- Sir. 23:1-6 A prayer to God for protection against temptation and sin.
- Sir. 28:1-7 Forgiveness of the wrongs done to us is necessary for God to pardon our sins.
- Mt. 6:9-15 Jesus teaches the Lord's Prayer and emphasises our need to forgive others.
- Mt. 6:25-34 Do not be anxious about anything; your Heavenly Father will take care of you and your needs if you seek first his Kingdom and holiness.
- Mk. 11:25 When we pray, we must forgive others, so that our Father will forgive our sins.
- Lk. 11:1-4 Jesus teaches a condensed version of the Lord's Prayer at the request of a disciples.
- Lk. 15:11-32 The Parable of the Prodigal son, showing the Father's merciful forgiveness.
- Lk. 19:39-46 Jesus admonishes his apostles to pray not to succumb to temptation and submits his will to his Father's.
- Jn. 5:30 Jesus acts only under his Father's authority because he seeks his Father's will, not his own.
- Jn. 6:32-35 The Father gives us the true bread, which is Jesus himself.
- Jn. 6:38-40 Jesus came to do the Father's will, which is to give eternal life to all who believe in his Son.
- Rom 8:14-17 We call God Abba, Father by the Holy Spirit, and become co-heirs with Christ if we suffer with him.
- Rom 14:17 The Kingdom of God is joy, peace, and righteousness in the Holy Spirit.
- 1Cor. 10:13 We all experience temptation, but God will not allow temptation we cannot withstand.
- Jas. 1:12-15 We will be rewarded if we endure temptation, but temptation itself is not from God but from our own desires.
- 1 Jn. 4:20-21 If we do not love our brothers and sisters, we do not love God, for love of God necessarily means love of our brothers and sisters.

### Catechism

- 2664 We pray to the Father only if we pray in Jesus' name.
- 2759-2772 The Lord's Prayer given to us by Jesus, summarises the entire Scriptures and is the prayer of the entire Church.
- 2777-2796 The meaning of praying to our Heavenly Father.
- 2803-2854 The significance of each of the seven petitions of the Lord's Prayer.

(Source: RCIA Catechist's Manual, Association for Catechumenal Ministry, Maryland, 2007)