

OUR FATHER



PRAYING THE OUR FATHER

Like the disciples, at times we may find it difficult to pray. Therefore it is good to ask Jesus the same question they asked Him: 'Teach us how to pray'. (Luke 12:1).

His answer was the prayer of the 'Our Father'. If we pray it from the heart, we cannot go wrong because it comes straight out of the lips of Jesus and it includes everything that is right for us to pray.

However it is easy to recite it without much thought. This booklet will help you unpack this prayer in eight simple steps.

**But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.
(Matthew 6:6)**

#1

OUR FATHER WHO ART IN HEAVEN

*Because you are sons, God sent the
Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit
who calls out, "Abba, Father."
(Galatians 4:6)*

Keep in mind

It is an immense privilege to come before God who assures us of His full and constant attention and to address Him as Father. So much so, in the English and Italian versions of the liturgy, the priest says 'we dare say ... Our Father'.

Don't consult your feelings about God at this present moment. In faith remind yourself of this truth and move on with your prayer, reminding yourself that Jesus refers to God as Father 17 times in the Sermon on the Mount and over 170 times in the Gospels.

Pray

Jesus, thank you that Your Father is also My Father - yours and mine and of the whole Church. Thank you for giving me the privilege of addressing Him in this way. I don't want to take it for granted.

Father, thank you that you are immensely bigger, better and loving than I can ever feel or imagine at the moment. In faith, I renew my trust in You.

Holy Spirit, thank you for being here in my heart to enable me to pray 'Abba Father'. Fill me more and more with a deep knowledge of God my Father and help me pray this prayer slowly and from my heart.

#2 HALLOWED BE THY NAME

*Praise be to the God and Father of
our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of
compassion and the God of all comfort.
(2 Colossians 1:3)*

Keep in mind

The Our Father sets the priorities straight. It challenges our disordered love of self, by praising God first. We can translate this verse as 'May you be praised and honoured' because in Scripture a name means a lot - it reveals who the person is. We praise God for who He is and we thank Him for what He does. Praise and thanksgiving draw our hearts away from focusing only on ourselves and helps us look towards God.

Pray

Lord, I praise and thank you not on the basis of what I am feeling at the moment, but because it is right and just for me to praise and thank you for all the blessings, graces and love you give me.

Heeding Your Word which tells me to 'give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus' (1Th. 5:18), today I thank you for ... (thank God specifically).

Thank you Lord for the Psalms of Praise in the Bible and the contemporary songs of Praise and Worship through which I can put into the practice the Psalmist's words: "I will praise God's name in song and glorify him with thanksgiving" (Psalm 69:30).

You may wish to pray Psalms 95 and 100.

#3

LET YOUR KINGDOM COME

*The Kingdom of God is within you.
(Luke 17:2)*

Keep in mind

When we pray this part of the Our Father, we are asking God to establish his loving rule, first and foremost in our own hearts. It is inviting Him again to be Lord of our life because we know how easily we can crowd Him out and get distracted in our spiritual journey.

Christ the King is no ordinary ruler. He is all powerful but the most humble. The Creator of the universe became part of His creation; the One to whom all the world belongs, not only serves us but takes up the cross to take our sin away and to raise us to eternal life.

Pray

Lord Jesus, I live in a world that looks down on dependence and exalts independence. But this part of the Our Father brings me back to the truth of your words in the Beatitudes: 'Blessed are the poor in spirit , for theirs is the kingdom of God' (Matt 5:3).

I recognise that to be 'poor in spirit' is to acknowledge my need and my dependence on your Word, grace, mercy and healing. So from my heart I pray 'Let your kingdom come' in my heart, in those who are already on the journey of discipleship and for those who still do not acknowledge you in their life.

Spend a short time of intercession.

#4

YOUR WILL BE DONE ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN

*For it is God who works in you to will and
to act according to his good purpose.
(Philippians 2:13)*

Keep in mind

Doing the Father's will, as shown by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount is central to the Our Father. It is essential for salvation: "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven (Matthew 7:21). So we keep in mind that one of the reasons we come to pray is for us to listen to God, to do His will and to obey Him. In this part of the prayer, we once again surrender ourselves and renew our commitment to do His will.

It is also good to remind ourselves that we need to be ready to change our way of reasoning to align ourselves to God's Word.

Pray

Lord you communicate your 'good, pleasing and perfect will in many ways' but primarily through the Scriptures. The Word not only expresses your will but transforms me, enabling me to carry it out. Give me an increasing thirst for the Scripture because 'Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path' Psalms 119:105

Read a passage from the Bible or from your daily devotional application. Ask the Lord for the grace to obey Him.

#5

GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD

"Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened. "Which of you, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? (Matthew 7:7-9)

Keep in mind

God is the lover and giver of life, and as St Irenaeus said. 'The glory of God is man fully alive'. This truth is expressed in this part of the prayer 'Give us this day our Daily Bread.' We don't ask for something which we deserve or have a right to. We ask because we need to receive what God gives us as a gift.

What is our basic need? God's providence goes far beyond the material. What we need is grace, the strength to be and remain rightly related to God, to persevere in our journey and to grow in holiness .

Pray

God you delight to shower us with your gifts because as your Word tells us: Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows (James 1:17).

I humbly ask you for grace to live in Your Presence and Your will.

Ask God specifically for whatever you wish to ask Him.

#6
FORGIVE US OUR SINS
AS WE FORGIVE THOSE
WHO SIN AGAINST US

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9)

Keep in mind

God is never more God than when He forgives our sins. He wants us to seek Him to help us examine our conscience and bring into the light our sins so we may repent and receive forgiveness. There is always more mercy in Him than there is sin in us.

Pray

Lord, as I examine my conscience before you, I acknowledge my sin and ask you to forgive me. I know that as I humble myself before You, You delight to show me mercy.

Lord I choose to forgive anyone has hurt me in the way you have forgiven me.

Choose to forgive anyone who hurt you in any way.

#7

LEAD US NOT INTO TIMES OF TRIAL

When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death. (James 1:13-15)

Keep in mind

This part of the prayer doesn't mean that God leads us into temptation. Rather, the prayer can have at least two meanings: help me not be stupid and place myself into situation where I will yield to temptation. And secondly, because moments of temptation will come anyway, the prayer is also a prayer for protection from falling into sin when we are tempted.

Pray

Lord help me not be surprised and annoyed by the fact that I get tempted. But give me determination, wisdom and strength to avoid placing myself in places and situations where I expose myself to temptation.

#8 DELIVER US FROM ALL EVIL

Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings. (1 Peter 5:8)

Keep in mind

In Matthew's version of the prayer, this last part reads: Deliver us from the evil one. In the conclusion of the Our Father, the Lord seems to be contrasting two very different fathers Our Heavenly Father in Heaven 'who knows what you need before you ask him' (Matt 6:8) and the evil one who Jesus calls 'a liar and the father of lies' (John 8:44).

The concluding part of the prayer therefore is a prayer for protection that the Lord wants to give us.

Pray

Deliver me Lord from the evil one's attacks especially discouragement, deceitful promises, division from others and diversion from my journey with you. I renounce all this in Your Name of Lord.

This, then, is how you should pray:

*"Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from the evil one."*

(Matthew 6:9-13)

