

Explanation of the *Our Father* Twenty-seventh Week in Ordinary Time Wednesday, October 10, 2018 Gal 2:1-2, 7-14; **Lk 11:1-4** (The *Our Father*, contains all the important teachings of Jesus.)

“Lord, teach us to pray just as John taught his disciples.”

It has been said, and I believe with a great deal of truth, that **the *Lord’s Prayer*, the *Our Father*, contains all the important teachings of Jesus.** Now of course it has to be unpacked, and it’s very simple actually.

First of all, when you pray **you have to know to whom you are addressing your prayer.** So he starts with this word “Father,” but actually he didn’t use the word “Father.” He used the word **“Abba,” which is really translated “Daddy.”** The word “daddy” has a very different feel from father. You could have a stern father; you can’t have a stern daddy. The **word “daddy” evokes warmth, intimacy, trust, comfort,** and that’s how we have to begin praying, **recognizing the one we are addressing is someone, first of all, from whom we come.** That’s the whole idea of fatherhood. **The fatherhood of God is the origin of everything,** so we are from God in the first place. **We acknowledge we are his children when we call him “Father” or “Daddy.”** But we acknowledge his **utter desire to be with us,** to hold us in his lap, so to speak, to use a term as a daddy would hold a child: comforting, protecting. So that’s the whole idea. **We have to know to whom we are speaking and what this being is.**

“Who art in heaven,” now the word heaven is often used as a word for the sky. In fact the ancient people thought God lived in the sky, or the gods lived in the sky, or on the top of mountains that were in the sky, Olympus for example. Even Yahweh in Judaism descends to Mount Sinai to visit, so **this idea of the sky being where God is, above us,** so to speak. Well of course **in Jesus’ view even the heavens are created by God,** and that’s why the Creed says, “I believe in God, the Father Almighty, who created heaven and earth.” So the heavens are also a creation, so that’s not where God lives. **He doesn’t live in his own creation that way, but rather beyond that in an utterly, infinitely transcendent way.** That’s what this refers to, the infinite transcendence of God. So on the one hand **God is intimate,** with us, holding us, comforting us, in fact more within us than we are within ourselves, according to Augustine; but on the other hand **infinitely transcendent—both at the same time.** Now this is a profound mystery; but it’s the truth, so it’s

important we know it. **So we are praying to a God who really cares about us, but whose care is actually infinite**, so beyond anything we can really grasp.

“Hallowed be your name,” that is **we always have to honor and respect the name of the true God**. Now many people don’t; they use the name of God in every kind of anger, when they are cross, when they are disappointed, when they are anxious, when they are angry about something, but, no, we don’t have to be blaming God. **When we hallow God’s name we are acknowledging the utter goodness and innocence of God. So God is never the source of our troubles**, as many people seem to think. Many people believe in actually a false God.

“Your kingdom come”—well first and foremost if we want to be children of God, **we have to want what God wants**. We can’t have our own desires first. First we have to have God’s desires, and it’s the kingdom. That is a way of putting in code everything God wants. **Everything God wants on this planet is the kingdom of God**. So when we pray for the kingdom coming, we are saying we want first and foremost what God wants, and that’s important that we keep our priorities straight.

But we also pray for what we need. **“Daily bread” is everything; it represents everything we need**.

Forgiveness of sins is absolutely essential, as we know, **but it has to be reciprocal**. We forgive as we give forgiveness, and there is no other way to receive forgiveness, to have our debts canceled. The only way we can have our debts canceled is cancel other people’s debts. **The only way our terrible choices can be nullified is to nullify everyone else’s terrible choices against us**.

“And do not subject us to the final test.” This is an almost oddest of all beliefs, that **there will be a final test for some people. If you prepare yourself there won’t be a final test for you**. Now most people don’t quite understand this aspect of Jesus’ teaching, and even the pope didn’t quite get it when he talked about the new translation of the French *Our Father*, and he said he liked a different translation. Actually what this means is that eventually as the world continues to grow and sometimes away from God there can be a terrible test that we can be put to, and this is praying that we won’t be put to the test.