

Our Father

A Lord's Flock General Assembly Topic

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Oftentimes, we pray when we need something or we are desperate. However, we must remember that the Lord's Prayer/Our Father focuses on God first, before our needs. The apostles asked: Lord, teach us how to pray. As disciples they wanted to imitate Jesus. Similarly, we, who are also His disciples, and should imitate Jesus. In fact, He taught us the prayer to His Father, the "Our Father" (Matthew 6:9-13). It is a family prayer that transforms hatred to love, doubt to faith, and sadness to joy (Luke 11:2-4).

1. What are the hindrances to prayer?

- 1.1. If we doubt God, then whatever we ask for will not be given to us (James 1:5-8).
- 1.2. We ask for something for selfish motives or to feed our passions (James 4:3).
- 1.3. There is anger, evil, or unforgiveness in our hearts (Psalm 66:18).
- 1.4. The husband does not honor and cherish his wife (1Peter 3:12).

2. What does "The OUR FATHER" mean?

- 2.1. Jesus addressed God as "OUR Father." We belong to God's family and we are children of God. This uproots us from individualism. "I am the way, the truth and the life; no one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14:6).
- 2.2. "Who art in heaven." God dwells in heaven. Our life on earth is a journey towards going home to the Father in heaven. Thus, with this perspective, we should challenge our priorities. What should we value most? What should we give time and attention to?
- 2.3. "Hallowed be Thy name." God is perfectly holy. We are praying that the Lord will make us holy. Let us strive to be God-reliant.
- 2.4. "Thy Kingdom Come." Our God is King. We are subjects to God, our King. Therefore, we must learn to obey Him. Where is this kingdom? Where Jesus is, the kingdom is there. Jesus is in the Holy Eucharist. The Church is where heaven and earth meet.

Our praise and worship should lead us to the church.

- 2.5. "Thy Will be done on earth as it is in heaven." We are praying that our hearts will be transformed to follow the will of the Father (not the reverse, that the Lord will follow what we want). "Your will be done" is an expression of our trust in God. He will transform our thoughts, choices, that we will see things in His perspective. God wants us to live in perfect charity.
- 2.6. "Give us this day our daily bread." Manna is the miraculous "bread of heaven" that God provided for the Israelites (Exodus 16). Everyday, we trust that God will provide what we NEED, not what we want. We pray that we have prudence, and the knowledge to seek what is good and what we should avoid. As children of God, we need the Holy Eucharistic.
- 2.7. "Forgive us..." When we pray, we are reminded that Jesus Christ died for our sins. We commit sin and ask for forgiveness. Thus, we also owe forgiveness to others.
- 2.8. "Lead us not into temptation." Temptation always comes to us. We pray that when we are struggling, God will not allow us to be burned; He will help us overcome trials, and we will not be separated from God's family.
- 2.9. "Deliver us from evil." This does not mean that we will not suffer, or will never be sick. These are inevitable. During these trials, we become closer to God. We are praying for deliverance from the evil one since we are no match to evil. We are praying that we remain strong in our faith and He will partner with us in fighting satan.

Conclusion: "AMEN" means we agree. So be it. Let us appreciate deeply our prayer to Our Father.

Reflection: What new insight did you learn in praying the "OUR FATHER." How will you change to follow His will?

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