

# The Lord's Prayer



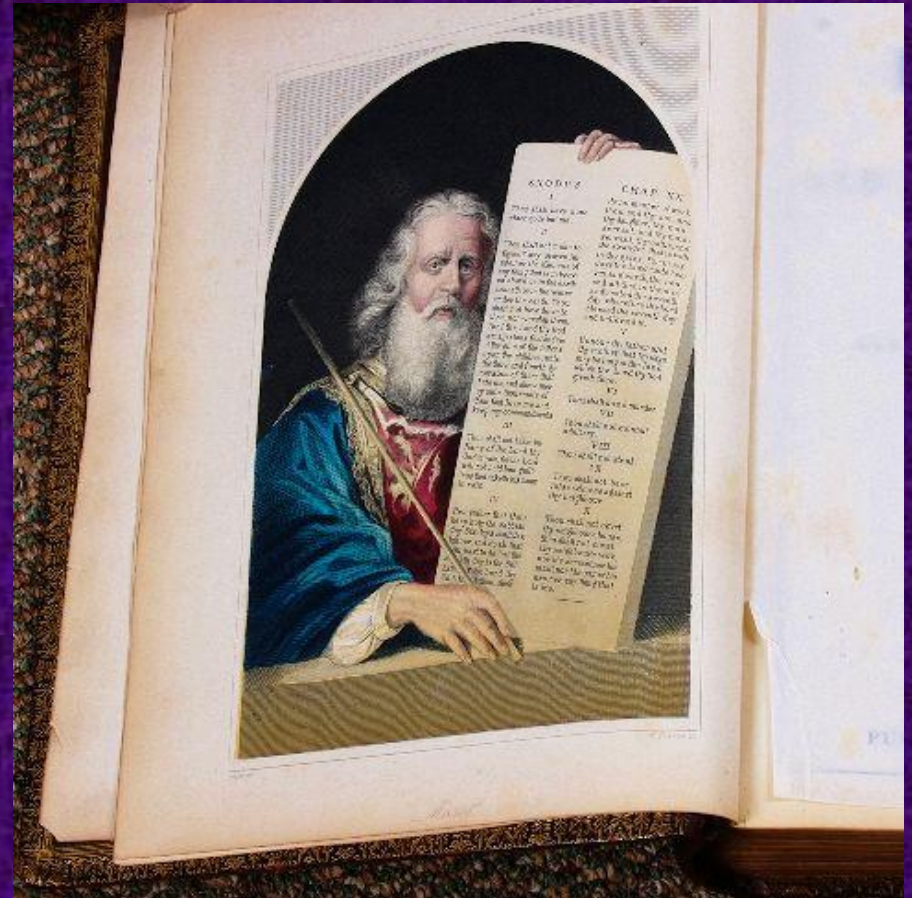
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# Scope of this Presentation

- What is the origin of the Lord's Prayer?
- Why is it the prayer of the Church and not just the individual?
- What does it reveal about God, our relationship to Him and how God wants us to pray?
- Why is this prayer so important to us as Catholics?

# Reference Sources

- Sacred Scripture
- Catechism of the Catholic Church (p 726 – 756)
- Sacred Tradition of the Church & the Liturgy
- New Catholic Encyclopaedia (2003 edition)
- Quotations from the Church Fathers
- Recent theological commentary (Scott Hahn)





# My Experience of the Lord's Prayer

- Catholic teacher (grade 5) in a public school
- Only response I knew when going to mass with my parents' friends
- Dying words of my great Auntie Lorna



# Sermon on the Mount

- Matthew 6:9-13
- Jesus reveals the right 'attitude' to prayer first
- Occurs right at the 'heart' of the sermon (in the middle)
- Central to our understanding of our faith





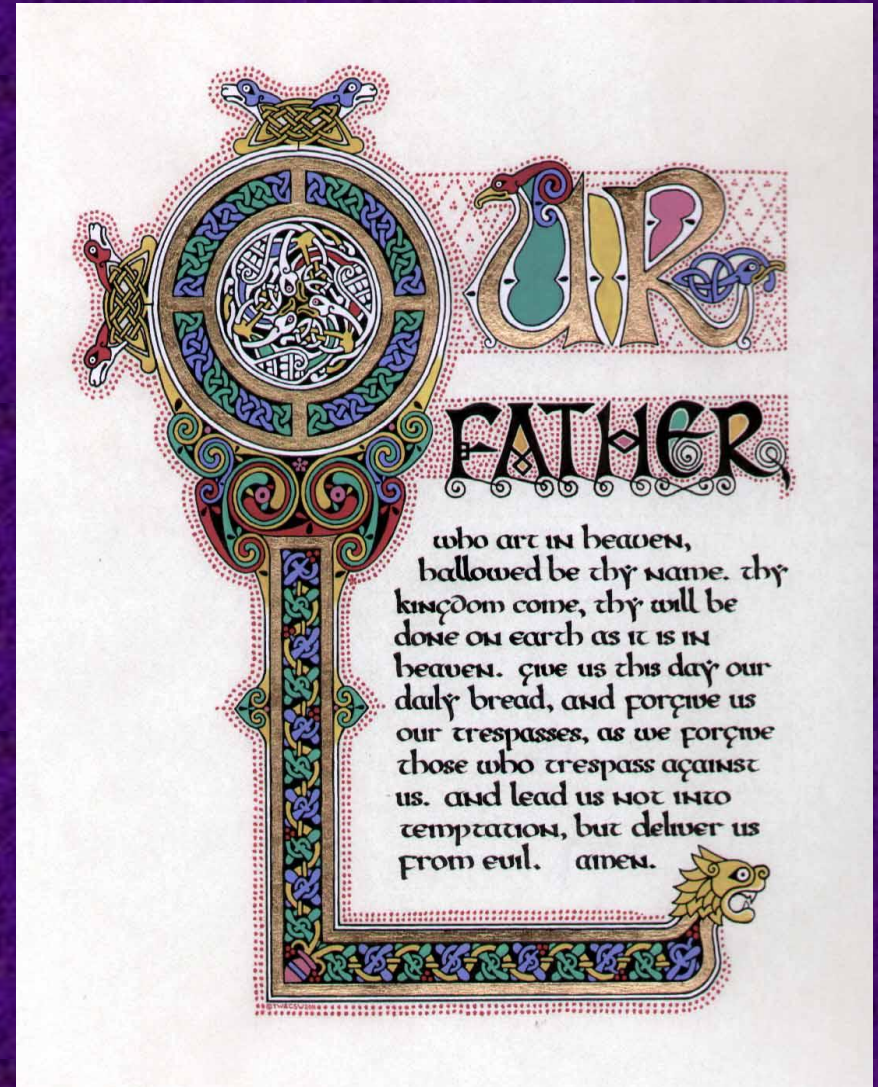
# “Lord, teach us to pray.”

- Luke 11: 2-4
- Occurs straight after the story of Martha & Mary
- Shorter version



# What does its structure reveal?

- Our Father... (the address)
- Seven petitions (requests)
- Order of petitions is significant
- 'We' are not mentioned until the fourth petition





# Our Father...

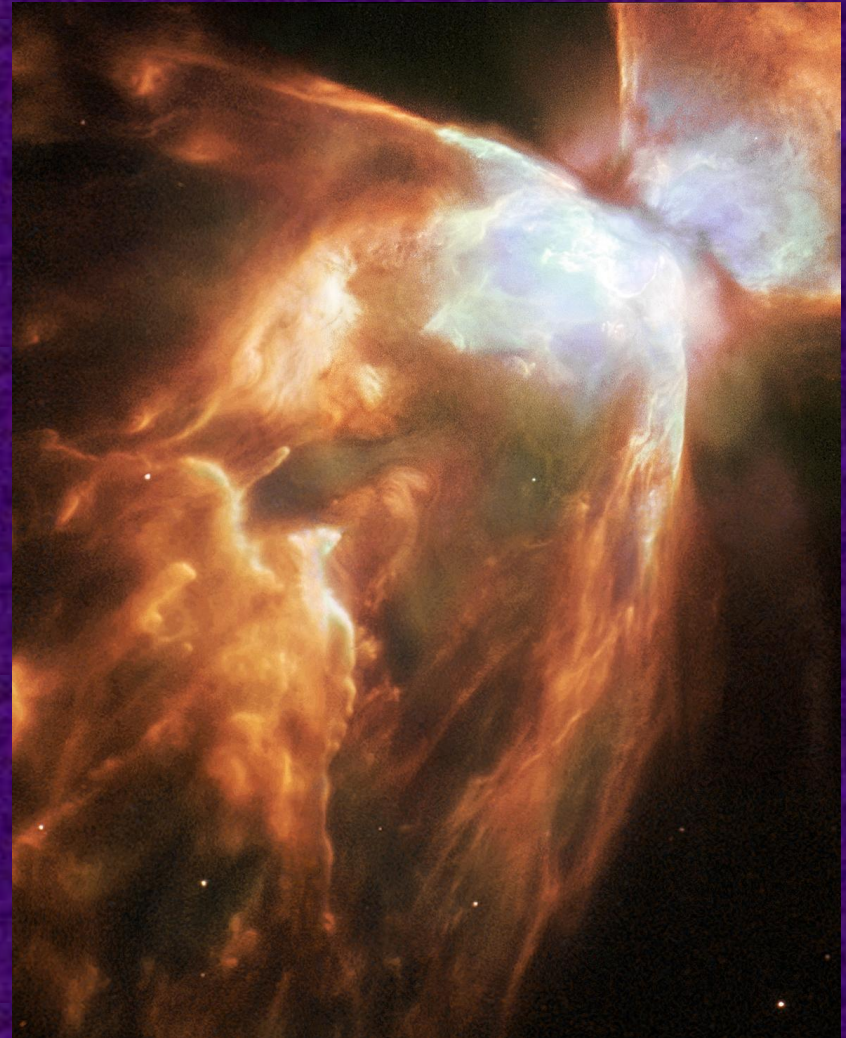
- 'Our', not ownership but reflecting our adopted kinship with God and Jesus as family
- 'Our' is communal, unity in prayer with others
- 'Father' - God has named Himself and therefore revealed Himself to us
- Intimate relationship between God and humankind





# ...who art in heaven,

- Heaven is not a 'place', more a description of God's majesty
- Sin is what creates distance between heaven and 'heaven on earth'
- Heaven refers to our home as well as God's home (where we will live with God in eternity)
- Home is where our Father is (heaven)



# Hallowed be thy name...

- Hallowed means 'make holy'
- We need to acknowledge God first for our OWN benefit
- Doing this gives us perspective on our own spiritual truth & the details of our lives





# Thy kingdom come...

- We look to the coming of Christ when we will be united with God in heaven
- We recognise a foretaste of this in the mass when Jesus becomes present in the Eucharist and we are united with Him



# Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven

- Uniting our will to God's will
- “On earth, as it is in heaven” applies to:
- THY NAME
- THY KINGDOM
- THY WILL





# Give us this day, our daily bread...

- “Give us” – strong language
- Physical and spiritual needs
- Daily trust in God
- ‘Super-substantial bread’ – Eucharist
- Daily mass



# And forgive us our trespasses,

- Matthew 18: 23-35  
Parable of the unforgiving servant
- Our challenge is to be merciful like our king, Christ the King





# ...as we forgive those who trespass against us.

- 'AS' is the important word
- Forgiveness is a decision, not a feeling
- It comes from the inside



# Lead us not into temptation,

- Acknowledge the battle between flesh and spirit
- Not that we will not experience temptation
- Instead we ask God to be with us at these times





# ...but deliver us from evil.

- We acknowledge the source of evil but the greater power of God
- Suffering is part of life but when we trust God, it has a redemptive quality



# Amen.

- So be it!
- Say it with conviction (Fr. Dan)





# What about the 'rest'?

- This is called the final doxology
- In the liturgy, it occurs when the priest holds up the body and blood of Christ
- Added to the Lord's Prayer in other Christian traditions



# Prayer of the Church

- We pray the 'Our Father' at every mass between the Eucharistic prayer and Holy Communion
- We pray to 'Our Father', offering petitions not only for ourselves but all our brethren





# The Early Church

- In the early Church, it was prayed 3 times daily
- It was always associated with the newly baptised, confirmed and those received into the Church



# Why is the 'Our Father' so sacred to Catholics?

- Words come from God
- Comes from Jesus who is also fully human as the Son of Man, therefore intimate with our needs
- A summary of our whole faith and expression of our special kinship with the Trinity
- It is the linchpin combining liturgy, Christian living, scripture and our salvific relationship with God
- Jesus is our model of prayer





# The Challenge Before Us

- In spite of our familiarity with the 'Our Father', explore the richness of each phrase and petition in a new way
- Meditate on the truth about God and our relationship to Him revealed in this prayer
- Pray it daily, recognising our unity with other Christians and the Church, in the liturgy, rosary etc.
- Recognise the 'Our Father' as the perfect prayer – a summary of the gospel message and our blueprint for Christian living
- See Jesus Christ as our ultimate model for prayer

# Final Thought

- St. Thomas Aquinas said, “The Lord’s Prayer is the most perfect of prayers...”

