

## **THE OUR FATHER JESUS TAUGHT US.**

### **“Lord Teach Us to Pray”**

*(Luke 11/1 and Mt 6/1-15)*

#### **Introduction;**

- Jesus used to spend long hours, even full nights, in prayer in deep communion with God his father.
- His disciples watched him intently, and moved by Jesus example, they also wanted to pray like Jesus, but they found it difficult to pray as we do. So, one day, one of them begged of Jesus: “Lord, teach us to pray”
- Jesus, I guess, rather than giving them a long and single instruction on prayer, from time to time, used to share with them his personal prayer experiences.
- Consistently, Jesus taught them how to pray. We too, like the Disciples, day in and day out, have to learn to pray.
- The way of praying Jesus taught them, Mathew and Luke very concisely encapsulated in what we call “The Our Father”
- The Our Father properly speaking is a summary and a description of the way Jesus prayed.
- Since prayer in general, and Christian Prayer in particular, is a gift of God; we have to ask Jesus to teach us to pray as He taught his Disciples.

#### **A Short Prayer:**

Dear friend, before you proceed any farther reflecting on the topic of “Praying like Jesus” spend a little time in prayer entreating our Lord Jesus to teach you to pray and say ‘mantra-like’ the words: ***“Lord, teach us to pray!”***

#### **Gospel Reflection.** Slowly and reflectively, read the following passages:

- ( **Luke 11/1-2**) \_“One time Jesus was praying on a certain place. When he finished, one of the disciples said to him:” Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples. Jesus said to them
- **Jesus replied: (Mt 6/1-15)** “When you pray, do not be like the hypocrites! They love to stand up and pray in the synagogues and on the street corners so that everyone will see them. But when you pray, go to your room and close the door, and pray to your father, who is unseen. And your Father, who sees what you do in prayer, will reward you”.
- “In your prayers do not use a lot of meaningless words, as the pagans do, who think that God will hear them because of their long prayers. Do not do like them.  
**This, then, is how you should pray:**
  - *At this moment, very slowly recite the “Our Father”*
  - *Pause and reflect after each line*

#### **Fantasy:**

In imagination, make yourself present to the events you meditate:

- Imagine you are in that hillock where Jesus sat down with his disciples
- Feel the freshness of the place, look at the sunny sky, the little lake, the grassy ground, the trees, smell deeply the scent of the flowers
- Look at Jesus praying. Gaze at Jesus' face and countenance. See his reverence towards his heavenly Father.
- Look at Jesus' disciples staring at their master...
- Listen to the request the disciples make to Jesus.
- Join them in their request: **“Lord, teach us to pray”**
- Now, listen to Jesus as He teaches them and you also how to pray.
- Read again the passages of Mathew and Luke mentioned above as if you were listening to Jesus.
- Stay on for a while. with your thoughts and feelings

### **Short Input:**

- ✓ After that incident, I am sure, Jesus instructed his Disciples many times on how to pray.
- ✓ The “Our Father, as it has come to us, is just a brief summary of the long hours Jesus spent instructing them how to pray.
- ✓ Jesus did not give the “Our Father” to his disciples as we have it now, nor dictated it to them as a prayer formula.
- ✓ Jesus never said:” When you want to pray, say ‘this’ or “that” prayer, but only he taught them how to pray.
- ✓ Later on, Luke and Mathew succinctly summarized Jesus teachings on prayer in a very short form which we now call ‘The Our Father’.
- ✓ The “Our father” therefore is not just a “formula”, a “prayer” or a “mantra” to be repeated mechanically by heart over and over again but a summary of the main teachings of the Lord on prayer.
- ✓ There is nothing automatic or mechanical in prayer.
- ✓ It is not just by reciting a prayer or ‘prayers’ even the “Our father” that we can be said that we are praying.
- ✓ It is only when in prayer we approach God with the proper attitudes of mind and heart, in a spirit of adoration and self-surrender that we really pray.
- ✓ I fancy that the ‘Our Father’ could be likened to the ‘table of contents’ or ‘the index of chapters’ of a book Jesus could have written on how to pray.
- ✓ If in keeping to the pattern of the Our Father, Jesus had written such a book, it would consist of **One Introduction and Nine Chapters,**

### **INDEX OF MATTERS OF AN IMAGINARY BOOK WRITTEN BY JESUS ON PRAYER.**

<b><u>Introduction.</u></b>	<b><u>Preparatory Steps for Prayer</u></b>
1st step	<b>Recollection.</b> Shut the door. Forget all except God
2nd step:	<b>Not too many words.</b> Pray with the heart, not with the mouth.
<b><u>Nine Chapters</u></b>	<b><u>Right Attitudes Required to Pray</u></b>
Chapter One.	<b>Filial Love.</b> Approaching God as a Loving Father.

Chapter Two	<b>Brotherly Love.</b> Pray not only for you alone but others as well
<b>Chapter Three</b>	<b>Gratefulness and Praise.</b> Thank and praise God for his all gifts.
Chapter Four	<b>Zeal for God.</b> That all peoples may know, praise and love God
Chapter Five.	<b>Adoration &amp; Worship.</b> Unconditional Self-surrender to God's will
Chapter Six	<b>Humility and a sense of Dependence.</b> We need Him for everything.
Chapter Seven	<b>Forgiveness of Injuries</b> Loving all, even your enemies as God does
Chapter Eight	<b>Acceptance of Our Moral Weakness.</b> Keep away from occasions
Chapter Nine	<b>Prudential Fear of Evil.</b> We are in danger of evil things and people.

### **Short Points on the Introduction and Nine Chapters of Jesus' Imaginary Book on Prayer.**

#### **Introduction. ;**

- “In your prayers do not use a lot of meaningless words, as the pagans do, who think that God will hear them because of their long and many prayers.
- Pray with your heart not with the lips only.
- Cut yourself from your daily occupations and distracting thoughts.
- Pay undivided attention to God while you pray

#### **Chapter I. When you pray. Keep in mind that God is Your Heavenly Father**

- In prayer, approach God as you would to a loving, kind, and forgiving father.
- Talk to God with love and confidence, without fears and anxieties.
- Yet, with respect and reverence. He is your Heavenly Father.
- Believe it in your very bones that there is no other father as good as God the Father.

#### **Chapter II. When you pray, pray also for all your Brothers and Sisters. (Our Father)**

- Speak to God not only as an individual, but as a member of the human family.
- Remember, God is not only your farther, he is our father, but also the father of all,
  - ✓ the just and the sinners,
  - ✓ Christians and non-Christians,
  - ✓ friends and enemies,
  - ✓ your family members and of strangers,
  - ✓ the dead and of the living,
  - ✓ the rich and the poor, etc.
- Pray specially for your enemies, those you dislike, those who did you wrong.

#### **Chapter III. Thank and Praise Him and ask that all peoples thank and Praise Him.**

*(Hallowed be thy name)*

- **Thank God-** your Heavenly Father- in season and out season, for all his gifts; body and soul, mind and heart, material things like food, housing and clothing, and also for formal things like, education, job, position in life, health and sickness, pleasant and unpleasant things in life Everyone and everything is a gift of God to you for which we have to thank God..
- **Praise God;** for his greatness, for his power and majesty, for his goodness, for his great love and justice. Praise Him for his creation and the beauty of our world. Praise him for the gift of Jesus his Son and Savior, for the Church and all his saints.

**Chapter IV. Pray that all the Peoples of the world may Know, Love and Serve Him and Jesus His Son.** *(Thy Kingdom come!)*

- Pray that love, peace and justice may reign in our world.
- That Jesus may be accepted as the Savior, and the universal King and the Son of God.
- That Christ's teachings may be known and practiced by one and all.
- That The Church may carry on his saving work in the world and be respected.

**Chapter V. Pray that God be Worshipped by all, in Spirit and in Truth, that all Surrender to his Will.** *(Your will be done on earth as it is done in heaven)*

- Ask for the grace to do always whatever God, your Father, wants you to do.
- Surrender to God's will whatever happens, pleasant and unpleasant things, as coming from your Father's loving hands.
- Pray that you may equally accept riches and poverty, health and sickness, short life and long life, success and failure as your heavenly Father disposes.

**Chapter VI. Ask God to satisfy your's and others' true needs. That you also may satisfy your brothers' and sisters' needs.** *(Give us our daily Bread).*

- Acknowledge to God your utter poverty and dependence from Him in all things.  
We are poor and indigent. We depend on God and on others to lead holy and satisfying lives.
- Ask your Heavenly Father to satisfy not only your material needs, but also your more important ones - your social, emotional, moral and spiritual needs.
- Beg also from your Heavenly Father to supply as well to your brothers' and sisters' wants and needs.
- Ask God to give you a generous heart towards your brothers and sisters, so that you too, as far as you can, help them in their needs.
- If you don't help others in their needs, you have no right to ask God to help you in yours.

**Chapter VII. Ask God to forgive you your sins as you forgive others the wrongs done to you.** *(Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us)*

- Humbly own up to God, to others and to yourself that you are a sinner that you have wronged them all.
- Forgive all those who did you wrong before you dare ask God to forgive you
- If there is anyone you have not forgiven yet, stop your prayer! Go and forgive him/her first, then come and pray to God.

**Chapter VIII. Let us not fall into temptation.**

- Temptations in themselves are not sin - they are part of human life - but they are dangerous, they may easily lead us to sin.
- Ask God for the strength needed to face and overcome trial.
- Be confident. God will always give you the assistance necessary to overcome temptation.
- Knowing that you are weak and inclined to sin, make serious efforts to avoid occasions of sin, such as: bad companions, dubious associations, drinking, unrestricted T.V. watching, unwise internet surfacing, reading dangerous materials, greed, pride anger,

sloth, etc

**Chapter IX. But, deliver us from evil**

- Foster a prudential fear of all evils, moral and spiritual.
- Pray that you may not fall into the wiles of the evil one.
- Keep away from evil things, evil people, superstitions, sorcery and the like

**Summary:**

**What Jesus taught us in the “Our Father” was not a prayer formula, but the basic**

**Attitudes we should have when we approach God in prayer.**

The “Our Father” therefore is not:

- A “prayer” in the popular sense.
- A “mantra” to be recited by heart.
- A “method” of prayer.
- A “technique” to facilitate prayer.

**An Appendix: Suggested Writing Activities**

**Alone by yourself**

- Take paper and pen.
- Imagine that your children, or your students or some else ask you “Kindly, teach me/us to pray.”
- Keeping in mind the instructions Jesus gave his disciples, write a two or three page essay on how would you teach him/them to pray as Jesus taught us.
- Do not be in a hurry. Take your time.
- When you complete your work, read it over and over again and try to practice it in your daily prayer.

**In a Group:**

- If ever you are teaching catechism or you happen to conduct classes or sessions on prayer, you may follow the hints below:
- Divide the larger group into small subgroups by counting from 1 to 9
- All the number ones – individually - will work on the first chapter of the “Our Father”: All the twos on the second chapter, and so on.
- Each student or each participant will write a short instruction on prayer developing the ideas of the chapter allotted to him/her.
- Later on, in their groups, they will share what they have written
- Finally, under your guidance, the entire house, may compile a summary of what they learned on “How to Pray as Jesus taught them”
- You may add your comments and thoughts.

