

SUNDAY PLUS

Our Father

The Gospel in a few lines



By Paul Higginson

The "Our Father" encapsulates the entire Gospel in just a few simple lines. As a wise teacher once advised when asked how to pray – "Say the Our Father and take an hour to say it". The focus of our prayer often begins with me: "what do I want?", "what do I need?" – but here we pray Our


Father (not *My* Father). Because Jesus sees us as his brothers and sisters, then we too can join him in calling God our heavenly Father – we are his children. The word Jesus uses is "Abba" – best translated as "Dad" in modern English.

We then pray for the coming of God's kingdom – a kingdom not of armies, thrones and worldly power but one of justice, peace and truth. We

are co-creators of this kingdom and this is to be our principal task in life. Earth is not a preparation for a heaven that is to come, it is the place where heaven is brought into being by our actions and our life with Christ. We ask for "daily bread", the practical and spiritual nourishment to sustain us, not just for ourselves, but for all those in need. We then pray for forgiveness from God in the

same way that we forgive those who hurt us. You cannot live an authentic life unless you are prepared to forgive. Finally, we ask God not to give us our "test" or "cross" until he has given us all we need to be able to get through it.

After many years in the classroom, Paul Higginson's retirement offers him new possibilities for contributing to parish life.

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy Name,
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those
who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.  Amen.

Prayer works

By Fr Royston Price C.Ss.R.

"I thank you Lord, with all my heart: you have heard the words of my mouth". The Lord always hears our prayer, those words we speak out loud, those made in the silence of our heart, and even those that we can't put into words, that bubble up from the depths of our inner life. We don't have to be notably articulate to pray, but just speak to God with confidence, talking to the Lord as we would to our best

friend. Indeed, Christ gives us the definitive Christian prayer in the Our Father: so simple that children can learn it at their parent's knee, and so deep that entire lifetimes can be spent contemplating and inhabiting it. We need to ask the Lord for everything, from our daily bread to help in our daily struggles, and also to place ourselves in the divine presence, raising our hearts and our minds to the God who has loved us from eternity.

Fr Royston Price is the Vocations Director for the London Province of the Redemptorists.

"We must pray to the Father, who begot us. But this is not all: we must pray "our" Father, that is, not the Father of a generic and too anonymous "all", but the One who begot you, who gave you life, who gave life to you and me."

Pope Francis

Feast of the week
Saturday 25 July

St James

Visit the Cast Courts of the Victoria and Albert Museum in London for an apostolic surprise! A vast, life-size, nineteenth-century plaster cast of the twelfth-century Portico de la Gloria at the cathedral of Santiago de Compostela in Spain brings many an amazed museum visitor to a standstill.

Tradition holds that the remains of St James are interred within the cathedral. Since the ninth century, countless pilgrims have headed to the Spanish city identified with the apostle.

Today, approximately 200,000 pilgrims per year follow the Camino de Santiago (the Way of St James). Each has their reasons for undertaking a pilgrimage which spans Europe and ends in the cathedral at Compostela. Since its creation, how many people have seen the V&A copy of the original cathedral entrance, remembering their journey's end and their pilgrimage-inspired life changes? How many walked before them in previous centuries? Only God knows. Similarly, only God knows who would have walked had they been able. Might the V&A offer a mini-pilgrimage destination?

Today:
Genesis 18:20-32
Colossians 2:12-14
Luke 11:1-13

Monday:
2 Corinthians 4:7-15
Matthew 20:20-28

Tuesday:
Jeremiah 15:10, 16-21
Matthew 13:44-46

Wednesday:
Jeremiah 15:10, 16-21
Matthew 13:44-46

Thursday:
Jeremiah 18:1-6
Matthew 13:47-53

Friday:
1 John 4:7-16
John 11:19-27 or 10:38-42

Saturday:
Jeremiah 26:11-16, 24
Matthew 14:1-12

Next Sunday:
Ecclesiastes 1:2; 2:21-23
Colossians 3:1-5, 9-11
Luke 12:13-21