



My Dear Brothers and Sisters,

We now return to our examination of the Mass. After the Eucharistic Prayer, we enter the Communion Rite. We begin by joining our prayers in the prayer taught by the Lord: the Our Father. The priest introduces the prayer by saying:

At the Savior's command and formed by divine teaching, we dare to say:

It is the Savior's command because Jesus taught us to pray this way, but what is this part about "we *dare* to say"? We know that God is so far beyond us... He is "other" in a way nothing else is other. He is not a being, but the ground of all being. His greatness and glory would blow our minds (I mean that literally) if we saw Him as He is, and as we are now. Of all time, no one would have thought of calling a god, or the God "Father." In fact, Muslims see this as blasphemy. The Israelite people understood themselves in a certain way as children of God, but to call God "Abba"... that was too much for them. Jesus shows us this is the relationship God wants to have with us, and so, now that this has been revealed, we can now dare to call God Abba, Father.

Together, we then pray the Lord's Prayer, worshipping God, and asking Him to be part of our lives. Jesus – the second person of the Blessed Trinity, Almighty God Himself – taught us this prayer! We should be in awe that God would humble Himself to teach us to pray. Because we are so familiar with the Lord's Prayer, it is easy just to say the words, and not enter into the mystery. So, it is good to take time to reflect on what we say in the prayer, and to whom we are speaking. One practice that has helped me over the years is to pray the Lord's Prayer backwards – beginning with the final petition ("deliver us from evil") and moving to the beginning – and so we end in the arms of Our Father.

We begin "Our Father." We start off as a family – God isn't simply "my Father" but "our Father." This means we are brothers and sisters in Christ. Yeah, we might not always get along, but if we remember that we are all His children, it will help us to love each other.

Then we recognize that He is in Heaven. Not because God is localized to a particular place and no other, but, rather, Heaven is wherever God is, that Heaven is being in the presence of God. While our eternal life will be split into Heaven and Hell, it's not so much the place that makes the split as the choice to be in the presence and love of God – or, conversely – to reject that presence and love for all eternity – which makes Heaven Heaven and Hell Hell.

We then praise God for the holiness of His name – and a reminder to us that we are not to take His name lightly. Just a gentle reminder that it is not just the name of Jesus which is holy, but "God" and "Lord." When we use His name in vain (not just in anger or as a curse, but in vain – uselessly), it is an offense against God, rejecting His holiness and His majesty.

We pray for His Kingdom – His reign and authority – to come, and His will be done here as it is perfectly done in heaven. This means: in ME! We're saying, "Lord, not my will, but yours be done in my life." That takes surrender and humility.

We then move into the petitions, asking God to move in our lives: "Give us this day our daily bread" or better rendered from the Greek, "our super-substantial bread." We ask God to give us the needs of our bodies each day, but also of our souls – the Eucharist! Then we beg God's forgiveness... but only to the extent that we forgive others. God is all merciful, but we are reminded in this prayer that my ability to receive mercy is directly related to how merciful I am. We ask God to keep us from temptation and from the evil one – for He is the only One who can save us!

The priest then says the Embolism (don't worry – it's not a blood clot, it is a prayer placed in between two other prayers). In this short prayer, the priest asks that we be delivered from evil, that we have peace, mercy, that we be free from sin and distress, and that we hope in the second coming of Christ. This then leads us into a doxology ("For the kingdom, and the power...") praising our God who loves us so much.