

Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time July 27 2025

When I was a kid,

my favorite superhero by far was Superman.

I remember watching Superman on TV when I got home from school.

This was the black and white series

starring George Reeves.

So I was really excited for the new

Superman movie which was released a few weeks ago.

There are great characters, amazing special effects and intense battles,

but I was really moved by the scene when Superman returns home to Smallville Kansas.

This is after he's experienced some setbacks and defeats -

he's doubting himself and his mission.

So he goes home to his mother and father -

Martha and John Kent - who adopted and raised him as Clark Kent.

His dad offers some great fatherly advice.

He reminds him that it's not his super powers that define him as a person.

Instead, it's this:

SCREEN: Your choices. Your actions.

That's what makes you who you are.

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In the gospel we just heard,

Jesus teaches his followers that any time they struggle in life,

any time they doubt themselves or question their mission,

they should turn to their Heavenly Father who will set them straight.

So let's dive into the gospel.

Jesus is our role model for prayer.

Every day, and often throughout the day, he took time to pray.

He returned to his father for guidance and support.

This practice inspired his disciples to follow his example.

And one day, after praying, one of them said to Jesus, “*teach us to pray.*”

And he gave them the words of The Lord’s Prayer.

Now, the version we heard from Luke’s gospel

is shorter than the one we pray at Mass,

but it contains all of the main points.

And it begins with these words:

**SCREEN: Father, hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come.**

“Father”.

I don’t know about you, but to my ears that title sounds
really formal and stiff.

I never addressed my dad as “father”.

Never asked:

“Father, may I borrow the car?”

“Father, can I have my allowance now?”

The word Jesus would have spoken wasn’t “Father”
but “Abba” which is roughly translated as dad or daddy.

Jesus wants us to see God as he did;

not as distant, cold, or aloof,

but as personal, intimate, and loving.

And like him, Jesus wants us to turn to God our Father,
every day pouring out our troubles and cares,
our worries and fears.

Because, after all, we’re family!

So with the first word, Jesus is inviting us into
the same loving relationship with his Father that he has.

Then Jesus tells us we should acknowledge
who God is: *hallowed be your name.*

Hallowed is another word for holy.

The reason we call our Father holy is because

God is the creator of heaven and earth and everything in it - including us.

When we pray the words, *“hallowed be thy name”*,

we are giving reverence and respect to God.

We praise and thank God

for everything we are and everything we have.

We are also acknowledging that God is all knowing and all powerful.

How many problems in our world today are because people have forgotten this?

When powerful and privileged individuals see themselves as God,

they feel emboldened to do whatever they want, whenever they want,

regardless of the consequences.

Their power blinds them from acknowledging who God is and who they are.

Jesus hopes that these first words of the prayer will be

a sobering reminder to ground us in reality and spiritual truth:

God is god and I am not.

Jesus also wants us to know that God can answer any prayer.

Any prayer - no matter how desperate or dire it might be.

Moving on, we pray the words:

“Your kingdom come”.

Now as I said, this version of the Our Father is in Luke’s gospel.

It doesn’t include the phrase *“thy will be done”*,

which I think is the most perfect prayer you and I can pray.

Thy will, God! Not my will, but your will!

These are the exact words Jesus prayed on the night before he died.

In the Garden of Gethsemane, knowing his death was just hours away,

he prayed saying *“Father, if it is possible, take this cup of suffering from me.*

But not my will, thy will be done.”

Because this was Jesus’s prayer in his hour of greatest need,

it should be your prayer too.

You might pray asking,

“God take away the pain I’m enduring and take it now...but thy will be done.”

Or, *“God please fix the brokenness in my family, please reconcile my marriage... but thy will be done.”*

“My friend needs a job, my finances need fixing...thy will be done.”

It's not wrong to ask God for specific things,
but the underlying attitude of every prayer we make should be,
“Thy will be done!”

It's God's ways and God's will before our own.

It's an acknowledgment that God who created us knows us
better than we know ourselves.

So God knows what is best for us.

Our goal as disciples is to conform our will to God's will.

The purpose of prayer isn't to change God, but to change us.

The prayer continues:

SCREEN: Give us each day our daily bread

Every human being has needs,
they might be physical, emotional, or spiritual.

Everything in our lives - food, cars, homes, possessions -
everything material comes from God.

Each time we pray these words Jesus wants us to acknowledge God
as the giver of everything.

Because of the fast paced culture we live in,
we want our needs to be satisfied right now -
instantly, easily, with no pain or sacrifice.

But how realistic is that?

So these words are also a plea for patience -

“Lord, just give me what I need for this day.

Help me focus on today and not be anxious about tomorrow.”

SCREEN: blank red background

Here's a powerful point about the Lord's Prayer.

Think of the words Jesus tells us to use:

They're plural:

OUR Father, OUR bread.

Give US, forgive US, deliver US.

He could have easily said:

MY FATHER, MY BREAD, GIVE ME.

But he chose the plural to make the point that
our needs are met in community, in relationship with others.

So with this prayer, Jesus is inviting us into a relationship
with God the Father, and also a relationship with others.

Our culture likes to celebrate the rugged individualist.

The person who goes through life all alone.

It's an appealing myth.

But it is a myth.

And it is not how Jesus wants his followers to live.

God is a community of persons: Father, Son, and Spirit.

And God the Son, created a community called the Church.

When it comes to our faith, we cannot practice it alone.

It's the reason we are continually encouraging you
to get involved in ministry and mission and to join a small group.

God feeds you and supplies your needs in community.

Next month we will be dedicating our new Cafe Pius.

A space for our parish family to come together for fellowship and food.

It will be a place for us to grow deeper in faith -
a place to be reminded of our mission to 'go out and make disciples'.

Because just as God feeds and supplies our needs in community

God wants us to do the same.

So even when it comes to asking God for forgiveness,
Jesus teaches us that the mercy we receive from our Father
must be shared with those around us.

We pray:

SCREEN: forgive us our sins

for we ourselves forgive everyone in debt to us

I love the particular way Luke words this.

Jesus just assumes that we forgive others.

It's not a question, not a debate, not a wish.

We simply do it.

He needs his followers - needs us - to be conduits of

God's mercy and forgiveness to anyone who has hurt us.

So practically speaking, every time we pray this part of the prayer we should think very specifically, *'Who has hurt me? Who do I need to forgive?'*

So many people really struggle to actually say the words *"I forgive you."*

And it can be hard to forgive someone who doesn't think they've done something hurtful.

But we have to forgive for our own well being.

As I've said many times before, if you don't forgive someone, you are just letting them live rent free in your head.

What if we didn't ask God to forgive us unless we first forgave those around us?

Jesus knows that forgiving others actually brings US peace.

It has the power to change our lives in unimaginable ways.

And Jesus gave us the most incredible example when he forgave his own executioners as he hung upon the cross.

And finally we pray:

SCREEN: do not subject us to the final test

In the conclusion of Luke's version,

Jesus teaches his followers that life is not about the here and now but the hereafter.

One day, every one of us will die.

Jesus doesn't want us to fear that day, but to prepare for it by being people of faith.

People who turn to the Lord every day acknowledging

God's greatness, goodness and mercy by extending those same things to others.

This week, I encourage you to pray the Lord's Prayer every day.

Maybe focus on a word or phrase that you need to see in a new way.

Perhaps focus on the word **GIVE** - acknowledge God as the source of all you have.

Perhaps the word **OUR** - think of how God is calling you to connect with others.

Maybe the word **DAILY** - ask God to help you see the ways

he comes to you as you go about your day.

Or **FORGIVE** - what do you need to be forgiven for, who do you need to forgive?

Later in the Mass, we will pray the Lord's Prayer together.

When we do, let's give extra special attention to the words we pray together.

And let's resolve to never pray Jesus' treasured gift to us in the same way again.

SCREEN: Your choices. Your actions.

That's what makes you who you are.

Superman's father offered this advice to his son.

May our choices and actions always reflect who we are.

We are God's children, brothers and sisters,

confident to call God Our Father.

Amen. +