

When I was a kid, my family had one of those commemorative bicentennial family bibles. Giant book, white cover, beautiful pictures, the front section had pictures and short bios of all the US presidents and a summary of American history. It was not just a decoration for the bookshelf, my mom wanted us to read it and learn it. We did. My sisters read and learned the bible stories to the extent they could since we were all still relatively young. I read and learned the part with the presidents and American history. I didn't really care that much about the scripture part. Except—there was a section with important prayers and I did memorize the Our Father prayer, which I forgot and had to relearn when I started to pray the Rosary years later.

Today's gospel includes Luke's version of the Lord's prayer which is shorter than Matthew's version. Matthew's version is the one most people learn and the version we will pray before Communion. Both versions include a series of petitions, including one which we might not realize is a petition: "Hallowed be thy name." I used to think this was just a statement, a short but fancy way of saying God was holy and therefore worthy of our praise and veneration. When we pray in this way—"Hallowed be your name"--God's name can inspire awe within us and prompt us to give him the praise, honor, glory, and gratitude which he is due.

"Hallowed be thy name" isn't just an attribute of God, it is actually a petition. We are praying that God's name be revered and honored. How is God's hallowed? Who hallows it? Objectively, it is God's work. God is the source of all holiness, he is the one who makes all things, including his name, holy. However, this should prompt a question: Why do we have to ask God to make his own name holy? Why would he want his name to be anything other than holy? Prayer isn't so much about getting God to respond, it is often about prompting a response within ourselves.

Praying in this way has a very passive feel to it. If God is the one who hallows and consecrated and makes things holy then I don't have to do anything. Right? Wrong. Saint Cyprian who was a martyr of the ancient church in Carthage in Northern Africa way back in the 3rd century wrote that for God's name to be hallowed—to be honored and revered and to be made holy—it is made holy and hallowed in us.

We who have been sanctified through baptism and receiving Jesus' body and blood in the Eucharist must live holy lives. If we live unholy lives we become a source of scandal and contradiction and, although we cannot take anything away from God himself, we can give him a bad name. If God's name is to be

hallowed, we have to be good examples by leading authentically holy lives, both interiorly and exteriorly. When we are less than holy we must ask God to forgive us and help us to do better in the future. God's name is holy and deserves to be honored and respected but for that to happen we have to hallow it and help others to do the same.

God's name is holy and we must always use it with great reverence, never to curse or blaspheme. Interestingly, for some people, one of the names by which we Christians address God is itself a form of blasphemy: Father. Our Father. To claim kinship with the creator of all things would be incomprehensible to some faiths, blasphemy to others. Yet at the savior's command and formed by divine teaching we DARE to call God our Father. Jesus wants us to know that no matter how far we have fallen or what we have done, God our Father doesn't just love us every now and then...his love is a love without end. If we need proof of this, just look at the cross. God the Father so loved the world that he sacrificed his only begotten Son so that his adopted children might have eternal life. The cross is proof of our Father's undying love.