



The Holy See

POPE FRANCIS **GENERAL AUDIENCE** St Peter's Square

Wednesday, 27 February 2019 [\[Multimedia\]](#)

Dear Brothers and Sisters, Good morning!

It seems that winter is nearly over and thus we have returned to the Square. Welcome to the Square!

In our journey of rediscovering the “Our Father”, today we shall delve deeper into the first of his seven invocations, namely, “hallowed be thy name”.

There are seven requests in the “Our Father”, easily divisible into two subgroups. The first three have at the centre ‘Thou/You’ addressed to God the Father; the other four have at the centre ‘us’ and our human needs. In the first part Jesus lets us enter his wishes, everyone turning to the Father: “hallowed by *thy* name, *thy* kingdom come, *thy* will be done”; in the second it is He who enters us and becomes the interpreter of *our* needs: daily bread, forgiveness of sins, help in temptation and liberation from evil.

Herein lies the matrix of every Christian prayer — I would say of every human prayer — which is always done, on the one hand, as a *contemplation* of God, of his mystery, of his beauty and goodness, and on the other, as a sincere and courageous *request* for what we need for life, and to live properly. Thus, in its simplicity and in its essentiality, the “Our Father” teaches those who pray it not to multiply empty words, because — as Jesus himself says — “your Father knows what you need before you ask him” (Mt 6:8).

When we speak with God, we do not do so in order to reveal what we have in our heart: he knows it much better than we do! Although God is a mystery for us, we are not an enigma in his eyes (cf. Ps 139[138]: 1-4). God is like those mothers for whom one look suffices to thoroughly understand her children: whether they are happy or sad, whether they are sincere or are hiding something....

Thus, the first step in Christian prayer is consigning ourselves to God, to his providence. It is as if

to say: 'Lord, you know everything; I do not even have to tell you about my pain; I ask only that you be here beside me: You are my hope'. It is interesting to note that, in the Sermon on the Mount, immediately after teaching the words of the "Our Father", Jesus exhorts us not to be worried or troubled about things. It seems like a contradiction: first he teaches us to ask for daily bread and then he tells us: "Do not be anxious, asking 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?'" (Mt 6:31). But the contradiction is only apparent: a Christian's request expresses trust in the Father; and it is precisely this trust that enables us to ask for what we need without worry or agitation.

This is why we pray by saying: "*Hallowed be thy name!*". In this request — the first one! "*Hallowed be thy name!*" — one feels all Jesus' admiration for the beauty and greatness of the Father, and the wish that everyone recognize and love him for what he truly is. And at the same time there is the supplication that his name be sanctified in us, in our family, in our community, in the entire world. It is God who sanctifies, who transforms us with his love, but at the same time we too, with our witness, manifest God's holiness in the world, making his name present. God is holy, but if we, if our life is not holy, there is great inconsistency! God's holiness must be reflected in our actions, in our life. 'I am Christian; God is holy, but I do many bad things': no, this is of no use. This also does harm; this scandalizes and does not help.

God's holiness is an expanding force, and we ask that the barriers in our world be quickly broken down. When Jesus begins to preach, the first to pay the consequences is precisely the evil that afflicts the world. The evil spirits curse: "What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the Holy One of God" (Mk 1:24). Such holiness had never been seen before: not concerned with itself but radiating outward. A holiness — that of Jesus — that expands in concentric circles, as when one throws a stone into a pond. The evil one's days are numbered — evil is not eternal; evil can no longer harm us: the strong man has arrived to take possession of his house (cf. Mk 3:23-27). And this strong man is Jesus, who gives us, too, the strength to take possession of our inner house.

Prayer drives away all fears. The Father loves us; the Son lifts up his arms to support ours; the Spirit works secretly for the redemption of the world. And we? We do not waver in uncertainty; for we have one great certainty: God loves me; Jesus gave his life for me! The Spirit is within me. This is the great certainty. And the evil one? He is afraid. And this is good.

Special Greetings

I greet the English-speaking pilgrims and visitors taking part in today's Audience, especially those from England, Wales, Norway and the United States of America. Upon all of you, and your families, I invoke the Lord's blessings of joy and peace. God bless you!

I offer a special thought to *young people*, to *the elderly*, to *the sick* and to *newlyweds*.

I wish that each one's pilgrimage to the Tombs of the Holy Apostles may encourage enthusiasm to spread the perennial newness of the salvific message brought by Christ to every person, beginning with the most distant and marginalized.