

## THE PRESENCE OF GOD (and the beginning of the Our father)

Prayer is not just asking for things, it's first and foremost praising and loving God; which is why Jesus, when giving the Our Father as the model of prayer, puts praise first: *Holy is your name. Acknowledging His importance, power and presence; may your kingdom come, may your will be done here on earth as in heaven.* In other words, may your heavenly mighty kingdom power be made present right here, right now. (Isaiah 64:1 "*O that you would tear open the heavens and come down*"). Starting any prayer with a time of praise and worship is the first way of being focussed on God's presence– "*God Inhabits the Praises of His People*" – Psalm 22:3. It is said that, if you only have 10 minutes to pray, spend 8 in praise and worship, and the remaining 2 in asking, and it will be more fruitful.

### Ways of experiencing God's presence

- Eucharist: Mass, communion, adoration. Prayer is communicating deeply with God – in fact communing with Him. Commune = to get very close to someone or something by exchanging feelings or thoughts. Holy Communion: receiving the very presence of God Himself. But even if (as at present) our opportunities for Holy Communion or Adoration are restricted, there are many other ways of practising the presence of God.
- Praise and Worship Father, Son and Holy Spirit with all your heart and mind and strength. (See above). Praise Him for His amazing creation, especially in the natural world and in the infinite variety and creativity of human beings. Praise Him with your body: raise your hands, dance before the Lord like King David!
- Meditate on the name of God. (eg I am who I am = I am actively continually being and causing existence to everything. Yah-weh = the sound of breathing in and out: God is the very breath of life. Someone has worked out that there 950 names of God in the Bible <https://christiananswers.net/dictionary/namesofgod.html>)
- Trust God, rely on Him, acknowledge Him in every part of your life, thank Him for simple everyday joys (eg a meal with the family); expect Him to act when you ask. *Give yourself wholly to God and live as if there is none but Him and you in the world. Hold God in your heart as your Father, as your God. Worship Him as often as you can, keeping your mind in His holy presence and recalling it as often as you find it wandering from Him. All the time; every hour, every minute, even in the height of work, drive from your mind everything that interrupts your thoughts of God.* (Adapted from *The Practice of the Presence of God* by Brother Lawrence) [FREE DOWNLOAD HERE](#)
- Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord, (Acts 3:19) If you feel that God is "rubbing you up the wrong way" like a cat being stroked from tail to head, then "turn around cat!" Stop trying to make God see things your way. Change your perspective and trust Him. *'The question is not "How am I to love God?" but "How am I to let myself be loved by God?"'*- Fr Henri Nouwen SJ. Our spiritual journey is not so much about our efforts to become perfect and connect with God; it's about becoming aware and responding to God's efforts to connect with us.
- Pray in the Spirit on all occasions. Praying *with* God is even better than praying *to* God. "*The Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God.*" (Romans 8: 26-27)

- Make time regularly to focus on His presence. Emmanuel = “God with us”. Picture Jesus sitting with you and talk to him as you would to a good friend. Remember that you have a guardian angel who helps you to experience God’s presence.
- Read His Word for pleasure: stop when you find a place which resonates with your emotion and just feed on the Word (Matt 4:4). Jesus is the Word of God made flesh: get to know him better by reading about him in the Bible.
- Commune in community: God is present in His Church – whether in gathering for Mass or prayer or community activities.

### **Meditation on the Lord’s Prayer (part one)**

I encourage everyone to meditate on the Lord’s Prayer, asking the Holy Spirit to reveal to you more and more of its meaning and power. One excellent place to find an extended explanation of the Lord’s Prayer is in the Catechism of the Catholic Church, which devotes nineteen pages to it.<sup>i</sup>

*Our Father in heaven*: Lord God, you are not a remote, uncaring god: you are a loving Abba (Daddy),<sup>ii</sup> revealed to us by Jesus, who cares deeply for me and for all mankind. You have created us as brothers and sisters whom you love equally and you call us to love you and each other. You enable us to love even our enemies through the redeeming love of Jesus,<sup>iii</sup> which makes us new creations<sup>iv</sup>, adopted into your family. You are not distant and unapproachable, because the Kingdom of heaven is within us.<sup>v</sup> Our true home is with you – in you we live and move and have our being.<sup>vi</sup>

Heaven is the fullness of communion with God. *Heaven "is neither an abstraction nor a physical place in the clouds, but a living, personal relationship with the Holy Trinity. It is our meeting with the Father which takes place in the risen Christ through the communion of the Holy Spirit."*<sup>vii</sup>

*Hallowed be your name*: I proclaim you as holy, awesome, mighty;<sup>viii</sup> I join with the angels and saints in heaven to praise, glorify and worship you.<sup>ix</sup> May everyone come to acknowledge you as their sovereign Lord God, so that you can make them holy.<sup>x</sup>

*Thy Kingdom come*: May your reign advance more and more powerfully as we surrender to you as king of our lives;<sup>xi</sup> may we allow your Spirit to work through us to bring your good news to the whole world, so that they may proclaim you king of their lives;<sup>xii</sup> and may all creation look forward to the final reign of God through Christ’s return.<sup>xiii</sup>

*Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven*: God seeks to have His way in every area of our lives. He does not do this to directly control our actions as if we have no free will; but when we yield our will to His, He has the freedom to work in us in ways we could never imagine. Lord Jesus, we unite ourselves to you, who have perfectly fulfilled the Father’s will.<sup>xiv</sup> With the help of the Holy Spirit, we surrender our will to yours, Father God, so that we too can fulfil your will<sup>xv</sup>, your plan of salvation for the life of the world. As we step out in prayer and faith to do your will, may we be united with all the powers of heaven<sup>xvi</sup> who praise you constantly. And may your mighty power come down<sup>xvii</sup> to renew the face of the earth.<sup>xviii</sup>

## Footnotes

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<sup>i</sup> Catechism of the Catholic Church #[2777-2865](#)

<sup>ii</sup> Romans 8: 14-17 The Bible, NRSVACE (New Revised Standard Version Anglicised Catholic Edition)

<sup>iii</sup> *Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.* Colossians 3:13 The Bible, NRSVACE

<sup>iv</sup> 2 Corinthians 5:17 The Bible, NRSVACE

<sup>v</sup> Luke 17:21 The Bible, NRSVACE

<sup>vi</sup> Acts 17:28 The Bible, NRSVACE

<sup>vii</sup> Pope Francis catechesis at the General Audience of 21 July 1999

<sup>viii</sup> *O LORD, our Sovereign, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory above the heavens.* Psalm 8:1 The Bible, NRSVACE

<sup>ix</sup> *Day and night without ceasing they sing, 'Holy, holy, holy, the Lord God the Almighty, who was and is and is to come.'* Revelation 4:8 The Bible, NRSVACE

<sup>x</sup> *Consecrate yourselves therefore, and be holy; for I am the LORD your God. Keep my statutes, and observe them; I am the LORD; I sanctify you.* Leviticus 20:7-8 The Bible, NRSVACE

<sup>xi</sup> *God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.* Philippians 2:9-11 The Bible, NRSVACE

<sup>xii</sup> *The law and the prophets were in effect until John came; since then the good news of the kingdom of God is proclaimed, and everyone is strongly urged to enter it.* Luke 16:16 The Bible, NRSVACE

<sup>xiii</sup> *we wait for the blessed hope and the manifestation of the glory of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ.* Titus 2:13 The Bible, NRSVACE

<sup>xiv</sup> *'Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done.'* Luke 22:42 The Bible, NRSVACE

<sup>xv</sup> *Not everyone who says to me, "Lord, Lord," will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.* Matthew 7:21 The Bible, NRSVACE

<sup>xvi</sup> *Another angel, who had a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. He was given much incense to offer, with the prayers of all God's people, on the golden altar in front of the throne. The smoke of the incense, together with the prayers of God's people, went up before God from the angel's hand.* Revelation 8: 3-4 The Bible, NRSVACE

<sup>xvii</sup> *Oh, that you would rend the heavens and come down... to make your name known to your enemies and cause the nations to quake before you!* Isaiah 64:1-2 The Bible, NRSVACE

<sup>xviii</sup> *When you give them your breath, life is created, and you renew the face of the earth.* Psalm 104:30 The Bible, New Living Translation