

PARISHES OF
ST PIUS X, ALDERLEY EDGE, ST BENEDICT'S, HANDFORTH

AND

SACRED HEART & ST TERESA'S WILMSLOW

WEEKLY REFLECTION

**Sunday 23rd November 2025: Christ King of the Universe
Prayer (6)**

The Our Father

The gift of prayer is like a treasure hidden in a field, more valuable than gold; priceless and to be cherished.

The Apostles asked Jesus, 'Lord teach us to pray'. The answer as given in the New Testament varies slightly in its precise wording between the version in the gospel of Luke (11:2-4) and that of Matthew (6:9-13). But, the overall answer is the Our Father, also known as the Lord's Prayer. Jesus answers by saying the words we now recite every time we attend Mass or say the Rosary:

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.

It is said that the Sermon on the Mount is a teaching for life and the Our Father is a prayer for life. The Our Father is a unique prayer because it comes directly from the Lord. It is the perfect prayer because it encapsulates everything for which we should pray. We are all familiar with the Our Father but how well do we pray it? Don't take it for granted or say it without a sense of its sacredness and holiness.

Sister Edward (RIP), who was a spiritual director in St Pius X parish for many years, encouraged her directees to recite the Our Father with arms extended (just as the priest does) so as to emphasise the uniqueness and importance of this prayer in particular. This is something we can all do day today.

When we pray the Our Father we are praying the prayer of Jesus, God's only Son, the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity. May the Holy Spirit give us a new sense of reverence and awe as we say the Our Father with open arms and say it from the heart.

Luke's account of the Our Father does not mention the phrase 'thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven,' included within Matthew's account. Bible Alive tells us that Pope Francis changed the Italian translation of the Lord's Prayer from 'Lead us not into temptation' to 'Do not let us fall into temptation'. Why have we not followed suit? I am sure that our fellow Christians of other denominations would see the sense of the alteration and remove the confusion if we gave the lead.

But, going back to Luke's omission. Why did he leave out 'thy will be done' etc. out of his account? Perhaps Jesus spoke the prayer more than once and used slightly different wording each time. That could be as good an explanation as any. It is difficult to work out the minds of the evangelists. Matthew was one of the Apostles and was probably present when Jesus spoke. Luke was not an Apostle but told us that his writings were based on eye witness accounts.

Luke's omission in a way does not matter as the phrase 'thy kingdom come' contains the meaning of 'thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.' When we pray for the Father's kingdom to come, we are clearly seeking that God's kingdom will be a reality on earth. But what is a kingdom? A kingdom is the area over which the king rules - where his sway and rule determine the way of life of his people.

In one sense, therefore, if we pray for the Father's kingdom to be reality on earth, it is not necessary also to pray that his will be done. We have already asked for that. In fact, it is the very heart of Jesus' own prayer and desire to see his Father's will be done everywhere. He knows his Father's heart; he knows his Father's love and because of this, he knows that the will of his Father is to give us far more and what is so much better than anything we could possibly will for ourselves. (Bible Alive)

St Thomas Aquinas tells us, 'The Lord's prayer is the most perfect of prayers. In it we not only ask for all the things we can rightly desire, but also in the sequence in which they should rightly be desired. This prayer teaches us not only to ask for things, but also in what order we should desire them.'

Kevin H.