



*Reflection on the Scriptures of the Day*  
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*Thursday of the Eleventh Week in Ordinary Time*

The universal prayer 'Our Father' is very popular among the Christians. This prayer unites everyone and brings everybody under the umbrella of God's care. When His disciples, in today's gospel, ask Him to teach them to pray, He taught them the prayer, 'Our Father,' which is a model of all the prayers. The Jewish people are noted for their devotion to prayer. Formal prayer is prescribed for three times a day. And the rabbis had a prayer for every occasion. Jesus instructs the crowd that they should not pray like the Gentiles, repeating empty phrases. He means that true prayer is not so much a matter of the number of words as of the frequency and the love with which the Christian turns towards God, raising his or her mind to God. So, Jesus teaches them a model prayer.

From the Lord's Prayer we learn at least two things that: First, prayer is quality and not quantity. Christ teaches us how to pray and gives us the proper attitude of prayer, that is, by calling God as 'Abba or Father.' He reminds us that the Father knows us and all we need better than we do and so let us trust and surrender ourselves to Him.

Second, Christ teaches us to pray in common. The Our Father is the prayer that draws all Christians together. St. Cyprian in his, *De dominica oratione*, (no. 8) said: "The Lord, Master of peace and unity, did not want us to pray individually and by ourselves. Indeed, we do not say 'My Father, who art in heaven' nor 'Give me this day my daily bread.' Our prayer is for everybody; so much so that when we pray, we do so not just for one, but for all people, because with all people we are just one." The interesting thing in our Christian prayer is that we pray in union with the whole Church. The prayer joins every believer. We join our prayer to the prayer of Christ who makes our prayer heard and pleasing before God. St Cyprian said: "Our prayer is public and common; and when we pray, we pray not for one but for the whole people, because we the whole people are one...."

Hence, let us be grateful to our Lord Jesus for teaching us a concrete model of prayer for all the prayers, through which we learn that all of us are the children of one God. Let us wish and pray that God's will be done and God's kingdom reign on earth forever.