

“Our Father” outline

Ben Snyder
4-1-2020

Topic: God the Father

- Challenge of talking about God the Father since it involves the Trinity: one God with three “persons” Father, Son, Holy Spirit
- Trinity is the central mystery of our Christian Faith

Central Point: God is the origin of everything and has supreme authority. At the same time, He is all good and loving to all of us His children. Meditations on the Our Father as the background.

1. **What does “God as Father” mean to you?** What image comes to mind?
 - Common first thought is the old man on the clouds with the big white beard
 - Not true since God is pure spirit, but can be a good starting image.
 - **Jesus is the ultimate answer of love. God the Father wants a relationship with us in a personal way with us. Father is a relational term that He has been revealing all through the Bible from Adam, to Moses, to the Israelites, and fulfilled completely in Jesus.**
 - Michelangelo images from the Sistine Chapel of God the Father good starting places for God the Father.
2. **God is the source of all creation. The “work” of the Father.**
 - a. Creation is a blessing and good since God created everything.
 - b. We profess in the Creed that God is “creator of heaven and earth, things visible and invisible.”
 - c. God is a good Father and gives good gifts to His children and provides for His creation. Matthew 7:7-11
 - d. We want to be careful not to divide God as Father=creator, Son=redeemer, Holy Spirit=sanctifier. All a work of God not divided to the persons. We say creation is a “Work of the Father” since “father” signifies an origin of something else (child).
 - e. Michelangelo images: 1st The yellow and white spheres=sun and moon. 2nd God actively creating Adam. Eve under the Father’s arm near Him.
3. **We are “his” people. “Our Father.”**
 - a. To say the “Our Father” would have been radical for Jews since while they knew God existed, to call Him Father in a personal way was not allowed. They wanted to kill Jesus for this apparent “blasphemy.”

- b. Deism says God creates the world but doesn't get involved. Christians say that God does care about and engage in creation.
- c. Saying "our Father" does not divide the Trinity. All prayer is addressed to the Father through Jesus in the Holy Spirit. We can pray to the Holy Spirit and Jesus and the Father equal since they are all God.
- d. "Our" is plural meaning that God is excluded to no one. All baptized Christians or those who profess God are his children.
- e. God's love is unlimited so our prayer is unlimited in scope.

4. **God is Almighty**

- a. God the Father's power extends to all times and places universally since He is the ruler and creator of all things.
- b. Bible says over and over "nothing is impossible for God."
- c. Michelangelo images: God is not weak. You can see the power and determination.
- d. God's ultimate expression of power is His mercy. He cares for our needs.
- e. Two myths:
 - I. God can't do anything about certain problems. How do we respond to evils like the Coronavirus?
 - II. "My sins are too big. I can't be forgiven."
- f. No easy answer to natural evils. God is all powerful, but why does He choose not to act? Sometimes in the middle of the biggest evils, great things come.
 - The biggest evil was the Crucifixion and death of Jesus, yet our redemption and salvation comes from the cross.
 - Mary believed the impossible that she a virgin would conceive Jesus.
 - History of the Bible moments of great evil (Joseph sold into slavery, Israelites being in slavery in Egypt, or wandering in the desert) leads to moments of great grace (Joseph's family is saved, Israel brought to freedom, and eventually the Promised Land.)
- g. The Mercy of God more powerful than our sins and all can be forgiven. Confession and grace bring reconciliation with God the Father. Prodigal Son shows the mercy of God.

5. **"Thy Will be Done"**

- a. How do we do the will of the Father? Seeking the will of God the Father is the center of our prayer life.

- b. Jesus Christ is our model of how to do the will of the Father: obedience.
 - c. Every part of life leads to holiness from scrubbing toilets to caring for a family, to going to work etc. All can be brought to God the Father.
6. **“The Kingdom Come”**
- a. Jesus came to proclaim the kingdom of God.
 - b. The Church is God the Father’s gift at Pentecost with the coming of the Holy Spirit to bring all things into His kingdom.
 - c. We can bring our daily life, work, prayer, etc. into this Kingdom as an offering to God.
 - d. Going to Mass and the Eucharist are the central point where we come together as the kingdom, but it is not the exclusive place. Each of us as a baptized Christian is part of the Kingdom of God wherever we go. How can we live and build that Kingdom now when we can’t come together at Mass? Prayer and living in the love of God in our daily lives.
7. **Practical applications: How do we live knowing God is Our Father?**
- I. Know your origin: Baptism is the greatest gift. We become adopted sons and daughters of God the Father and heirs of Heaven. A great gift we must pass on. Celebrate the feast of you and your kid’s Baptism like a birthday since we were born to be sons and daughters of heaven.
 - II. Build a relationship with the Father. Meditate on the love of the Father in prayer once a week. It is easy to pray to Jesus since He has a more concrete image/illustration in the Bible.
 - III. Be models of the Father’s love in your family. We are flawed persons, yes, but the more we work to be “perfect as our Heavenly Father is perfect” the more we can love our kids and show them the love of the Father. “How can I be the face of the Father’s love? Where do I need to be healed with my image of the Father?”
 - IV. Pray the “Our Father” as a family or as an individual with meaning and intention once a day. It can be too easy to go too fast and miss the prayer at Mass, in the Rosary, or with others.