

Prayer makes fear flee, says Pope Francis

We present our needs to the Father precisely because we know he has our needs covered, says pope in reflection on Our Father Christian prayer, and even all human prayer, springs from the contemplation of the mystery and beauty of God on the one hand, and the presentation of our needs and petitions on the other, according to Pope Francis. And thus, the Our Father gets to the essence of prayer.

When we speak with God, the pope explained, picking up another reflection on the Our Father in the general audience, we are not “revealing to him what we have in our hearts.”

“He knows much better than we do!” the pope assured. “While God is a mystery for us, we on the contrary, are not an enigma in his eyes.”

Therefore, the first step in Christian prayer is “**the surrender of ourselves to God, to his providence**. It is as if to say, ‘Lord, you know everything. I don’t even need to tell you about my problems. I just ask that you stay at my side. You are my hope.’”

Pope Francis noted that right after teaching the Our Father, Jesus tells us not to worry about things.

It seems like a contradiction.

First he teaches us to ask for our daily bread, and then he says, “Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What will we eat?’ or ‘What will we drink?’ or ‘What will we wear?’”

But it’s only an apparent contradiction. A Christian’s petitions express confidence in the Father. And it is precisely this confidence that enables us to ask for what we need without anxiety or agitation.

The first petition of the Our Father — may your name be hallowed — reveals “all of Jesus’ admiration for the beauty and the greatness of his Father,” the pope said, “and his desire that all of us recognize and love him for what he really is.”

At the same time, it is the supplication that his name be hallowed in us, in our families, in our communities, in the whole world. It is God who sanctifies us, who transforms us with his love, but at the same time, it is also we who show with our testimony the sanctity of God in the world, making his name present.

God’s sanctity is an “expanding force,” the pope said, and we ask him to make it break down the walls in our world.

When Jesus begins to preach, the first to pay the consequences is precisely the evil that afflicts the world. The evil spirits ask him, “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” (Mark 1:24). They had never seen a holiness like this. ... Evil has its days numbered. It is not eternal. Evil can no longer damage us. The strongman has arrived to take possession of his house. And this strongman is Jesus, who gives us as well the strength to take possession of our interior house.

Prayer makes fear flee, the pope said. “The Father loves us, the Son raises his arms beside ours, and the Spirit works in secret for the redemption of the world.”

And us? We do not vacillate in uncertainty, but instead, we have certainty. God loves me. Jesus has given his life for me. The Spirit is within me. And this is the great certainty. And evil? Evil is afraid. And this is beautiful.