



## WHY IS THE OUR FATHER AN IMPORTANT PRAYER?



GOSPEL



ANSWERS

HE WAS PRAYING IN A CERTAIN PLACE, AND WHEN HE HAD FINISHED, ONE OF HIS DISCIPLES SAID TO HIM, "LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY JUST AS JOHN TAUGHT HIS DISCIPLES." HE SAID TO THEM, "WHEN YOU PRAY, SAY: FATHER, HALLOWED BE YOUR NAME, YOUR KINGDOM COME. GIVE US EACH DAY OUR DAILY BREAD AND FORGIVE US OUR SINS FOR WE OURSELVES FORGIVE EVERYONE IN DEBT TO US, AND DO NOT SUBJECT US TO THE FINAL TEST.

- LUKE 11: 1-13

## SAINTS & INSPIRATIONAL STORIES

### BLESSED THERESE OF JESUS

Blessed Therese lived a simple life but one of deep faith. She lived the words of the Our Father – give us our daily bread – and took one day at a time, doing the best she could to serve and help the people in her life.



### ELIZABETTA SANNA

Elizabetta lived a far from normal life with many twists and turns. But the constant in her life was her faith and her love for God. She knew that God was her loving Father who would not only care for her, but also for her children.



## TEAM DISCUSSION

After reading over the YOUCAT numbers on the following pages, how do you think the Youth Catechism answers the question of the week? Were there any words or ideas that you did not fully understand that you would like to understand better?

## ANSWER IN YOUR OWN WORDS:

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## YOUCAT NUMBERS FOR THIS WEEK



**#511 WHAT ARE THE WORDS OF THE OUR FATHER?** 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. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen. The Our Father is the only prayer that Jesus himself taught his disciples (Mt 6:9-13; Lk 11:2-4). That is why the Our Father is also called “the Lord’s Prayer”. Christians of all Christian denominations pray it daily, both in the liturgy and privately. The conclusion, “For thine is the kingdom . . .” is mentioned as early as the “Teaching of the Twelve Apostles” (Didache, ca. A.D. 150), and so it can be added to the Our Father.

**#516 HOW CAN PEOPLE SAY “FATHER” TO GOD IF THEY HAVE BEEN TORMENTED OR ABANDONED BY THEIR EARTHLY FATHER / THEIR EARTHLY PARENTS?**

Human fathers and mothers often distort the image of a kind, fatherly God. Our Father in heaven, however, is not the same as our experiences of human parents. We must purify our image of God from all our own ideas so as to be able to encounter him with unconditional trust.

**#522 WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO SAY, “GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD”?**

The petition about our daily bread makes us people who await everything from the goodness of our heavenly Father, including the material and spiritual goods that are vitally necessary. No Christian can pronounce this petition without thinking about his real responsibility for those in the world who lack the basic necessities of life.

**#512 HOW DID THE OUR FATHER COME ABOUT?** The Our Father came about at the request of one of Jesus’ disciples, who saw his Master praying and wanted to learn from Jesus himself how to pray correctly.

**#513 WHAT STRUCTURE DOES THE OUR FATHER HAVE?** The Our Father consists of seven petitions to our merciful Father in heaven. The first three petitions relate to God and the right way of serving him. The last four petitions present our basic human needs to our Father in heaven.

**#514 WHAT POSITION DOES THE OUR FATHER HOLD AMONG PRAYERS?** The Our Father is “the most perfect prayer” and the “summary of the whole Gospel”. The Our Father is more than a prayer—it is a path that leads directly into the heart of our Father. The early Christians recited this original prayer of the Church, which is entrusted to every Christian at Baptism, three times a day. We, too, should not let a day pass without trying to recite the Lord’s Prayer with our lips, to take it to heart, and to make it come true in our lives.

**#515 WHERE DO WE GET THE CONFIDENCE TO CALL GOD “FATHER”?** We can be so bold as to address God as Father because Jesus has called us to a close relationship with himself and made us children of God. In communion with him, “who is in the bosom of the Father” (Jn 1:18), we are privileged to cry, “Abba, Father!”



# CONQUEST WEEKLY ACTIVITY GUIDE

## **#517 HOW ARE WE CHANGED BY THE OUR FATHER?**

The Our Father allows us to discover joyfully that we are children of one Father. Our common vocation is to praise our Father and to live together as though "of one heart and soul" (Acts 4:32). Because God the Father loves each of his children with the same exclusive love, as though we were the only object of his devotion, we too must get along together in a completely new way: peacefully, full of consideration and love, so that each one can be the awe-inspiring miracle that he actually is in God's sight.

**#519 WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO SAY, "HALLOWED BE THY NAME"?** To "hallow" or to treat God's name as something holy means to place him above everything else. A "name" in Sacred Scripture indicates the true nature of a person. To hallow God's name means to do justice to his reality, to acknowledge him, to praise him, to give him due honor, and to live according to his commandments.

**#520 WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO SAY, "THY KINGDOM COME"?** When we pray, "Thy kingdom come", we call for Christ to come again, as he promised, and for God's reign, which has already begun here on earth, to prevail definitively. François Fénelon says, "To will everything that God wills, and to will it always, in all circumstances and without reservations: that is the kingdom of God which is entirely

**#521 WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO SAY, "THY WILL BE DONE ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN"?** When we pray for the universal accomplishment of God's will, we pray that on earth and in our own heart it may become as it already is in heaven. As long as we continue to set our hearts on our own plans, our will, and our ideas, earth cannot become heaven. One person wants this, the other that. We find our happiness, however, when together we want what God wills. Praying means making room bit by bit for God's will on this earth.

**#518 IF THE FATHER IS "IN HEAVEN", WHERE IS THAT HEAVEN?** Heaven is wherever God is. The word "heaven" does not designate a place but, rather, indicates God's presence, which is not bound by space and time. We should not look for heaven above the clouds. Wherever we turn to God in his glory and to our neighbor in his need; wherever we experience the joys of love; whenever we convert and allow ourselves to be reconciled with God, heaven opens there. "Not that God is where heaven is, but rather heaven is where God is"







## **#525** **WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO SAY, "LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION"?**

Because every day and every hour we are in danger of falling into sin and saying No to God, we beg God not to leave us defenseless in the power of temptation. Jesus, who was tempted himself, knows that we are weak human beings, who have little strength of our own with which to oppose the evil one. He graciously gives us the petition from the Our Father, which teaches us to trust in God's assistance in the hour of trial.

## **#527** **WHY DO WE END THE OUR FATHER WITH "AMEN"?**

Christians and Jews alike from ancient times have concluded all their prayers with "Amen", thereby saying, "Yes, so be it!" When a person says "Amen" to his words, "Amen" to his life and his destiny, "Amen" to the joy that awaits him, then heaven and earth come together and we are at the goal: with the love that created us in the beginning

## **#523** **WHY DOES MAN NOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE?**

"Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God" (Mt 4:4, citing Deut 8:3). This passage of Scripture reminds us that men have a spiritual hunger that cannot be satisfied by material means. One can die for lack of bread, but one can also die because one has received bread alone. In a profound sense we are nourished by the one who has "the words of eternal life" (Jn 6:68) and a food that does not perish (Jn 6:27): the Holy Eucharist.

## **#524** **WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO SAY, "FORGIVE US OUR TRESPASSES, AS WE FORGIVE THOSE WHO TRESPASS AGAINST US"?**

Merciful forgiveness—the mercy that we show to others and the mercy that we ourselves seek—is indivisible. If we ourselves are not merciful and do not forgive one another, God's mercy will not reach our hearts. Many people have a lifelong struggle with their inability to forgive. The deep blockade of being unreconciled is resolved only by looking to God, who adopted us "while we were yet sinners" (Rom 5:8). Because we have a kind Father, forgiveness and reconciliation in life are possible.

## **#526** **WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO SAY, "DELIVER US FROM EVIL"?**

"Evil" in the Our Father does not mean a negative spiritual force or energy, but rather Evil in person, whom Sacred Scripture knows by the name of "the tempter", "the father of lies", Satan, or the devil. No one can deny that evil in the world is devastating in its power, that we are surrounded by devilish suggestions, that there are often demonic processes at work in history. Only Sacred Scripture calls things by their name: "For we are not contending against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world rulers of this present darkness" (Eph 6:12). The petition from the Our Father "deliver us from evil" brings all the misery of this world before God and begs God Almighty to free us from all evils.

