

The Source of The Lord's Prayer
 The Lord's Prayer, also referred to as the Our Father, comes from scripture. Both Matthew 6:7-15 and Luke 11:1-4 recount the event when Jesus teaches the disciples to pray. In Matthew's Gospel, this occurs as part of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount where he is teaching those with him many things. In Luke's Gospel this event is prompted by a request from one of the disciples for Jesus to 'teach us to pray just as John taught his disciples.' It is the fuller text from Matthew's Gospel which forms the prayer used today.

The Structure of The Lord's Prayer
 In Matthew's Gospel there are seven petitions. Petitions are prayers asking for God's help. The first three petitions are 'thy' petitions and 'relate to God and the right way of serving him.'¹ The other four are 'us' petitions. Which 'present our basic needs to God: 'give us, 'forgive us,' 'lead us not' and 'deliver us'.²

Our Father, who art in heaven,
 In this prayer we say 'our and 'us' not 'my' and 'me.' God has created every single human being that has ever existed and is Father to each one of us. Praying the words 'our' and 'us' reminds us that we are 'the body of Christ.'
 Calling God 'Father' reminds us of our relationship with him. It is an intimate relationship and it is both a joy and a privilege that we can address him in this way. God is all that we would want a father to be 'good, just, loving.'³
 'Heaven is where God is...Where God is, there is heaven. There is joy without end. There is a place for us in heaven.'⁴

1. hallowed be thy name
 To hallow is to make something holy. God, of course, is holy but what we are praying here is that God should be recognised as holy and treated as holy. It reminds us that through our words, actions, thoughts and prayers we are acknowledging God as holy. It is also about the desire that all people should also come to believe this: God should be honoured and praised and given true reverence and respect by all people everywhere.

<p>Luke 11:1-4 Once Jesus was in a certain place praying, and when he had finished, one of his disciples said, 'Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples.' He said to them, 'Say this when you pray: "Father, may your name be held holy, your kingdom come; give us each day our daily bread, and forgive our sins, for we ourselves forgive each one who is in debt to us. And do not put us to the test."</p>	<p>Matthew 6:7-15 Jesus said to his disciples: 'In your prayers do not babble as the pagans do, for they think that by using many words they will make themselves heard. Do not be like them; your Father knows what you need before you ask him. So you should pray like this: Our Father in heaven may your name be held holy, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. And forgive our debts, As we have forgiven those who are in debt to us. And do not put us to the test, but save us from the evil one. Yes, if you forgive others their failings, your heavenly Father will forgive you yours; but if you do not forgive others, your Father will not forgive your failings either.'</p>
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"Lord, teach us to pray..."

You Who

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.
 Amen.

} Do

2. Thy kingdom come
 The coming of the kingdom of God has already started with the life, death and resurrection of Jesus and ultimately it will come when Christ returns once more. The second coming is something we hear a lot about during the first two weeks of Advent. In preparation for the coming of the kingdom and prompted by the Holy Spirit, we try to build the kingdom here on earth by the way in which we live our lives.

7. but deliver us from evil
 Linked closely to the previous petition we are asking God to protect us and to free us from evil. Immediately after we pray the Our Father in Mass, the priest prays 'Deliver us, Lord, we pray, from every evil, graciously grant peace in our days, that, by the help of your mercy, we may be always free from sin and safe from all distress, as we await the blessed hope and the coming of our Savior, Jesus Christ..' Thus in this moment we are praying with the knowledge that Christ will come again.

Amen
 This final word is our affirmation of all our beliefs encapsulated in this prayer: 'So be it.'

4. Give us this day our daily bread
 In this petition we are praying for both our spiritual and physical needs. There is more than one nuance to the word bread. Bread is part of our staple diet across the world so this serves as a reminder of the commitment expressed in CST to sharing the world's resources and protecting the poor and marginalised.

More importantly, bread refers to the Eucharist which is the source and summit of the Catholic faith. 'The Eucharist is our daily bread...Its effect is then understood as unity, so that, gathered into his Body and made members of him, we may become what we receive.'⁹

We should desire to receive the Eucharist as often as possible because it is what sustains us, therefore the word daily is included.

Another nuance relates to Jesus response when faced with the temptation in the desert. He quotes Deuteronomy and says "'One does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'¹⁰ This reminds us that for spiritual nourishment, we also need to hear and act upon the Word of God given to us in the scriptures.

3. thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
 It is God's will that we should 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart ...and love your neighbour as yourself.'⁵ However, God does not impose his will on us and so the earth, unlike heaven, is a disordered place. We freely have to choose to be the agents of change.
 In scripture we see the example of both Our Lady and Jesus choosing to do God's will: at the Annunciation Mary says, 'let it be done to me as you have said.'⁶; Jesus at prayer in the garden of Gethsemane says 'Yet not what I want, but what you want.'⁷ In this petition we are praying that we too will accept the will of God and, in doing so, we recognise that being a follower of Christ may bring challenges but that he asks us to 'Take up your cross and follow me.'⁸

6. lead us not into temptation
 In this sixth petition, aware of our own human weaknesses we simply ask God not to put us to the test in any way, and to give us the strength to resist all the temptations which we face.

5. forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us
 Knowing that we have many failings, we turn to God and ask for his mercy which because of his great love for us we know is boundless. We know that if we are truly sorry our sins will be forgiven through the Sacrament of Reconciliation. But asking for God's mercy is a regular part of our prayer: in Mass during the Introductory Rite we ask for forgiveness and ask for the Communion of saints and all our brothers and sisters to pray for us; prayers at the end of the day may include a form of Examen; praying an Act of Contrition.
 Coupled within this petition, is also an awareness that, as followers of Christ, we too must show mercy and forgive others.

References and Further Reading

1. Youcat p280
2. Explaining the Seven Petitions of the Our Father Tim Hedrick
3. Youcat for Kids p212
4. Ibid
5. Matthew 22:37, Mark 12:30, Luke 10:27
6. Luke 1:38
7. Mark 14:32
8. Matthew 16:24, Luke 9:23
9. St. Augustine quoted in the Catechism of the Catholic Church 2837
10. Matthew 4:4, Luke 4:4

Catechism of the Catholic Church: Christian Prayer Section Two