

The OUR FATHER and US

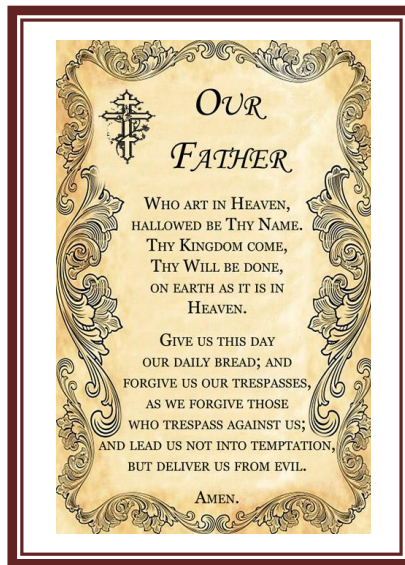
Sometimes we repeat something so often that we don't think about what the words really say or the real meaning behind them. We say them by rote. That is exactly what can easily happen when we pray the **OUR FATHER**, unless we intentionally focus on the words, their meaning, patterns and its origin. And doing so can also bring it to life!

Here are some things that you may not know about the “**LORD’S PRAYER**” or “**OUR FATHER**” as we Catholics call it. If you do not know, you’re not alone. For example, “*How many sentences are in The OUR FATHER?*” That question is a tough one and a little tricky because we see it punctuated many different ways. More often than not, The OUR FATHER is broken up into two sentences or halves starting with “**Our Father...**” and “**Give us this day...**” Sometimes, you will see it written as three sentences (as it is below) or four sentences beginning with “Our Father...”, “Thy Kingdom Come...”, “Give us this day...” and “And lead us not...”. Of course, if you include “Amen.”, you have to add one.

Here is a more challenging question: “*What word is repeated the most number of times in the OUR FATHER and considerably more than the one (s) in second place?*” If you don't know, don't feel bad, most priests and preachers, deacons and ministers, who view it from more of a theological standpoint, do not analyze the prayer's words and patterns to this extent. In general, it's likely that only a fraction of one percent of people will give the right answer to that question and if they do, it's probably just a good guess. Ask them how many times it is repeated, for the word that precedes them or the petitions we are asking for and you'll likely get a blank stare!

Most people seem to guess the “**Thy**” or “**Our**” which are both repeated three (3) word, and only one word, that

*What is that **special word**?* easily missed because they are prayer and we tend to say it by rote. What is also worth noting the first and last two times that four petitions we ask of Our Father a verb or action word: Give **us** trespasses), Lead **us** (not into (from evil). The fifth time it is time) it reads “as we forgive **us**”.



most repeated word is either good attempts because they times each. But there is one is repeated five (5) times!

It is “**Us**”. Though they are all in the second half of the rote and rush to the end. about the word “**Us**” is that it appears, they precede the Creator and are preceded by (this day), Forgive **us** (our temptation) and Deliver **us** repeated (or third sequential those who trespass against

All of this may leave you with the impression that the OUR FATHER is all about us, but “Hark, the Lord taught us how to pray a very balanced prayer that praises His Father, Our Father”. During the first half of the prayer we are acknowledging God and praising Him...and we do it an equal number of times: five. That is, if you count Our “**Father**” and “**Who**” as twice, plus the three times that “**Thy**” appears (Thy Name, Thy Will and Thy Kingdom).

So, the next time that you say the **OUR FATHER**, give **Him** your undivided attention in this prayer of just fifty-six (56) words. And if you want some practice, heed the advice of Saint Pope John Paul II and Bishop Fulton Sheen and Pray the Rosary every day. Open up your eyes, heart and mind to God and be more present as you pray for His blessings: (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.