

## Missionary Commentary

Seventeenth Sunday of Ordinary Time

July 27, 2025

## Sunday Readings

Genesis 18:20-32

Psalm 138: 1-8

Colossians 2:12-14

Luke 11:1-13

[USCCB Link to the Readings](#)

## Knowing God as Compassionate Father

Christian creeds address God as Father. Calling God “Our Father” is a personal address, asserting his care for all creation, especially for all humanity. God’s fatherly care is already found in the Old Testament (Deut 7:6-9); however, Jesus reveals a totally new, profound meaning to addressing God as “Father.” God is called “Father” 170 times in the Gospels [Mark (4); Luke (15); Matthew (42); John (109)].

**Prayer to our Father.** God’s fatherhood is a clear hallmark of Jesus’ life and prayer. Frequently, Jesus prays to his *Abba*. He calls God “my Father” (Mt 11:26; Lk 10:21). His mission is from the Father (Jn 11:41-42). During the last supper he addresses his Father (Jn 17:1, 5, 11, 21, 24, 25). Jesus turned to his *Abba* in the crisis moments of his life: Gethsemane (Mk 14:36; Mt 26:42), Calvary (Lk 23:34). His dying words are: “Father, into your hands I commend my spirit” (Lk 23:46).

**A Faith Affirmation.** Addressing God as “Our Father” is already an act of faith; it reflects both our relationship to God and to others. Jesus taught his disciples this prayer on different occasions. The New Testament preserves two versions—one by Matthew (6:9-13) and one by Luke (11:2-4), found in today’s Gospel. Because Jesus the Lord taught this prayer to his disciples, it is known as the “Lord’s Prayer.” Tertullian called it “the summary of the whole Gospel,” and Saint Thomas Aquinas said it is “the most perfect of all prayers.”

**Structure of the Our Father.** The first half of the “Our Father” expresses our faith by praising God, asking that “your kingdom come.” The second half of the “Lord’s Prayer” consists of petitions. When we Christians in faith express our needs to our Father, we are also committing ourselves to making our prayer requests a reality. Praying for our daily bread means doing our part and sharing in the Church’s mission to relieve hunger and deprivation.

**Our Petitions.** We ask forgiveness with the sincere promise to forgive others. We also ask that we would not be led into temptation. Note that we are not asking that we never be tested or tried; we do accept that, in fact, God allows testing as a way of determining the depth and genuineness of our faith. Our prayer is simply asking that we be spared from being tested beyond our capacity to endure trials and tribulations.

*next page*

*continued from previous page*

As we plead for this grace, we also commit ourselves to “bear each other’s burdens” (Gal 6:2) and remain in solidarity with others who are experiencing life’s difficult challenges.

**Papal Prayer.** Pope Francis, the “pope of mercy,” had focused the Church’s attention on the theme of mercy. His document, *Misericordiae Vultus (The Face of Mercy)* [April 11, 2015], includes this prayer: “Lord Jesus Christ, you have taught us to be merciful like the heavenly Father.... You are the face of the invisible Father, the God who manifests his power above all by forgiveness and mercy. Let your Church [our communities-in-mission] be your visible face in the world ... [bringing] good news to the poor.” Jesus assures us: “Blessed are the merciful; they shall obtain mercy” (Mt 5:7).

## Notes on the Readings

### First Reading – Genesis 18:20-32

Today’s first reading from Genesis continues the narrative from last week’s reading. It focuses on the corrupt towns of Sodom and Gomorrah, located near the south end of the Dead Sea. We notice how Abraham pleads with God to show mercy toward the towns, even if there are only a few innocent people living there.

### Responsorial Psalm – Psalm 138: 1-8

This psalm praises God for the numerous mercies received: “Lord, on the day I called for help, you answered me.” We affirm with the psalmist: “Your kindness, O Lord, endures forever.”

### Second Reading – Colossians 2:12-14

Paul’s letter to the Christian community at Colossae expresses the meaning of Christ for our lives. Through baptism we have died and risen with Christ. He has borne all our burdens, snatching them up and nailing them to the cross. We now live an abundant life of grace, all due to the overflowing love of Jesus!

### Gospel – Luke 11:1-13

Luke’s Gospel is known as the “Gospel of Prayer.” In it we see Jesus at prayer. He exhorts us as his followers to be prayerful persons, teaching us how to pray. Luke’s version of the “Our Father” is shorter than the more familiar Matthean version. Jesus insists that we must be persistent in our prayer, assuring us that his heavenly Father will give the Holy Spirit to those who ask.

Notes and Commentary by Maryknoller James H. Kroeger, who has recently published [\*Walking with Pope Francis: The Official Documents in Everyday Language\*](#) (Orbis Books) as well as [\*Exploring Vatican II Treasures: Actors, Events, Insights\*](#) and [\*A Joyful Journey with Pope Francis\*](#) (Faith Alive Books).

Please pray for the missions,  
May God bless you in all the ways you Go Forth...

Support our work! [Donate online today.](#)



**Go Forth ...** is a service funded by the Catholic Communications Campaign and USCMA, a community of faith leaders engaged in networking, formation, and advocacy for God’s mission. All who serve God’s mission are welcome. Learn more at [www.uscatholicmission.org](http://www.uscatholicmission.org) or call 202-832-3112.

