

The Hidden Life of the Kingdom

Matthew 6–7

What We Found

- Jesus assumes his disciples give alms, pray, and fast (“when,” never “if”) and relocates all three into the secret where only the Father is watching. The angel Raphael commended the same three pillars in Tobit (Tobit 12:8), one of the seven books Catholic Bibles have always carried.
- What Jesus forbids in 6:7 is empty pagan word-piling, not familiar words: two verses later he gives a fixed prayer, in Gethsemane he prays “the same words” (Matthew 26:44), and heaven itself repeats its praise without ceasing (Revelation 4:8). The answer to bad repetition is not no repetition; it is attention.
- The Our Father’s seven petitions put the Father’s priorities first and our needs inside them: the whole Gospel in summary, and never merely a private prayer, always “our.”
- Against anxiety Jesus argues like a father: if God feeds birds and dresses lilies beyond Solomon, how much more you. Seek first the kingdom, and tomorrow is the Father’s business.
- The Sermon ends in dead earnest: not everyone who says “Lord, Lord” enters, but the one who does the Father’s will. Hearing these words and doing them is the rock.

Voices of the Church

Voices of the Church: St. Cyprian of Carthage (On the Lord’s Prayer)

We dare to call God Father only because the Son authorized the words: what could God refuse to those who pray in his Son’s own prayer? And every pronoun is plural: the prayer of Christians is never a private possession but the voice of the whole Church.

Voices of the Church: St. Augustine (Letter to Proba, on Prayer)

Whatever words we pray, if we are praying rightly, we are saying nothing that is not already contained in the Lord’s Prayer. Run through its petitions and you will find every legitimate desire of the heart gathered there.

Voices of the Church: St. John Chrysostom (Homilies on Matthew)

The applause of men is paid in full on the spot and is worth exactly what it costs. What is done for the Father’s eyes alone is stored where no moth or thief can reach it.

Live It This Week

- Pray the Our Father once a day at walking speed, one petition at a time, and let it audit your other prayers.
- Choose one secret act: an alms nobody learns about, a fast nobody notices, a prayer with the door shut. Tell no one.
- When anxiety starts its speech this week, interrupt it out loud with this week's verse.

Scripture Memory

Matthew 6:33 (RSV2CE): *"But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things shall be yours as well."*

Before Next Session

Read Matthew 8–9, watching for how many different kinds of people come to Jesus and what he does for each.

Catechism References

CCC 1434 · CCC 2761 · CCC 2837 · CCC 2608–2615