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"Father, hallowed by your name ..." (Luke 11:2).

[Gal 2:1-2, 7-14](#); [Luke 11:1-4](#)

The setting for this gospel account has Jesus praying while his disciples observe him. We can only imagine what it was about Jesus that moved them to ask him to teach them how to pray, but there must have been something in his posture, gestures and demeanor that struck them.

The prayer he taught them was more than words. He invited them to step into his own relationship with the *Abba*, his intimate name for God. The prayer is short and reflects all the elements of the most basic prayer every Jew said each day: "Hear, O Israel, the Lord your God is one. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your mind, all your spirit and all your strength. You shall love your neighbor as yourself." Likewise, the "Our Father" commits us to a total surrender to God, then demands reconciliation with neighbor as the sign we are one with God.

The essence of the prayer is an intimate union with God and with one another. The whole thrust of the Good News is that God is inviting us into the divine life, unconditional love received and shared. This is the life of Christ, the communion we are incorporated into at baptism. This is the life of every disciple: We are the children of God, and our mission is to extend the Beloved Community Jesus initiated by our love and service of others. We pray the Our Father together at every Mass, right before we receive Communion, the sign of our identity and mission.

To say the Our Father frequently is to remind ourselves of who we are and why every day holds meaningful ways to deepen our relationship with God and one another. As a kind of Christian GPS built into our hearts, this prayer will keep us the path through life to eternity. For when we pray it, we are standing right next to Jesus in a face-to-face moment of love with our *Abba*, our merciful Father.

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