



IT'S IN THE WORDS



LITURGY BYTES *by Michele Hall*

OUR FATHER, *who art in heaven*

One of the most familiar prayers we have is the Our Father, a/k/a the Lord's Prayer. At every liturgy, we rattle the words off, but did we ever realize what those words mean?

Sometimes I catch myself rambling on the words of this prayer, just moving my lips whether it is during Mass or privately. I guess because, like most of us, we have said this prayer a million times that our minds go blank when praying the Our Father. We forget that this is the prayer that Jesus taught his disciples when they asked him, "Lord teach us to pray." It is important to remember that when we pray the Our Father, not only are we using the words that Christ gave us, but we are praying the way that Jesus himself prayed. Each word of this prayer is the opportunity for deep reflection on who God is and how Jesus shows us the way to Him.

The language of the Our Father is a little different and brings us back to a different era, but it does unite every Christian throughout history. It is the same prayer that Peter, James, John, and Mary Magdalene prayed, not to mention Thomas Aquinas, Mother Teresa, Oscar Romero and all the Popes have prayed. The prayer clearly states that we must first forgive others to receive then God's mercy. Obviously, we have work to do. We must recognize that we need to forgive others and recognize that we are sinners. We ask much of God in this prayer, but our asking comes with a job for us to do.

Even when we forgive others, confess our own sins, and allow ourselves to experience God's mercy, this is not the end of the story. We must continually ask God not to allow us to go down a sinful path. Temptations are all around us, so it is important not to journey alone. We need our God to help us by saying OUR FATHER. Perhaps, Lent is a good time to slow down and let these words touch us more deeply.

Have a prayerful, peaceful, and safe week ahead!