Tuesday of the First Week of Lent

Gospel text (*Mt* 6:7-15): Jesus said to his disciples: "(...) This is how you are to pray: 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. "If you forgive men their transgressions, your heavenly Father will forgive you. But if you do not forgive men, neither will your Father forgive your transgressions."

The "Lord's Prayer": structure and contents

EDITORIAL TEAM evangeli.net (based on texts by Benedict XVI)
(Città del Vaticano, Vatican)

Today, we examine the "Lord's Prayer". It is the prayer of Jesus Himself, and therefore it's a Trinitarian prayer: with Christ, through the Holy Spirit, we pray to the Father. It comprises an initial salutation and seven petitions. The first three are "Thou petitions" and they concern the cause of God Himself in this world; the remaining four are "we petitions" and they refer to our hopes, needs and hardships.

The relationship between the two sets of petitions could be compared to the relationship between the two tablets of the "Decalogue", which essentially are explications of the two parts of the great commandment: to love God and our neighbor. The "Our Father" then, begins by establishing the primacy of God, which then leads to a consideration of the right way of being human.

—First of all, I have to step outside of myself and open myself to God. For this reason, the "Our Father" begins with God and, from that starting point, shows me the way toward "being human".

"Our Father, who art in Heaven"

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Today we emphasize that the "Lord's prayer" begins with a great solace: we can say "Father", because the Son is our brother and He has revealed the Father to us; because thanks to Christ we have become once more the sons of God. The history of redemption is contained in one single watchword. The "everlasting love" which the Lord completed on the Cross by praying for His enemies, shows us the Father's nature: He is this love.

To be His sons means to follow Jesus. The word "Father" applied to God involves the call to live as His

children. To "be a son" does not imply dependence but remaining in this relationship of love that bestows meaning and greatness on human existence. And we say "Our Father" because only in that "we" can the disciples call "Father" to God, for only in communion with Jesus Christ can we truly become "sons of God".

—Heavenly fatherhood unites: it tumbles all walls and creates peace. "Heaven" means that other altitude of God where we all come from and where we all should endeavor to head towards.