

OUR FATHER

Mt 6:9; I Cor 8:5-6

I. NAMES REVEALING

- A. Formal: Titles (e.g. Mr. President)
- B. Friendly: nicknames, “honey,” “sweetheart”
- C. Christian: Paul, Paula
- D. Familial: mother, father
- E. Uniquely, in N.T. God is referred to as *pater* 245 times, 170 by Jesus
- F. “What is a Christian? . . . the richest answer I know is that a Christian is one who has God for his father.”
Indeed: “Father is the Christian name for God” (J.I. Packer: *Knowing God*, pp. 181-182).

II. “FATHER” GOD MEANS

- A. **First Person** of the Holy Trinity (begetting the Son, breathing the Spirit)
 - 1. Boethius: a person is “an individual substance of a rational nature”
 - 2. Unlike impersonal deities—“The Force,” “Mother Nature,” cosmic energies
 - 3. Unlike self-centered, self-constructed deities, evident in Virginia Mollenkott: “I am a manifestation of God. God Herself. God Himself! God Itself!”
 - 4. As a Person, Father God speaks, listens, acts,
 - 5. As the First Person, the Father is the Source of all that is: Creator
- B. **Almighty** (“maker of heaven and earth and of all things visible and invisible”)
 - 1. “For with God nothing will be impossible” (Lk 1:37)
 - 2. Important Caveat: God cannot violate His Nature by doing illogical, self-contradictory things (e.g. making a square circle or endorsing sin); Thomas Aquinas: “since power is said in reference to possible things, this phrase, God can do all things, is rightly understood to mean that God can do all things that are possible” (ST, I, 25, 3)
- C. **Truth** (“principle and source of all truth”)
 - 1. From our standpoint as Plato said: “He who says that which is, says the truth”
 - a. Current weather, geographic position, historical moment
 - b. Accurate assessments: height, weight, sex,
 - c. Many efforts to deny truth to justify feelings
 - 2. From the ultimate, God’s perspective, truth is the essence, actual identity, of what is
 - a. Aquinas: “God himself, Who is the primal truth . . . is the rule of all truth [and] the principle and source of all truth” (SCG, II, 83)
 - b. “In the beginning was the Word . . . All things were made by Him” (Jn 1:1-5)
 - c. As we see the truth in things we are seeing the Truth making/sustaining them
- D. **Holy** (“You alone are holy,” Rev 15:4)
 - 1. Transcendent—uniquely, utterly God, supernaturally apart from creation
 - 2. Pure—utterly unalloyed, fully good, morally
 - 3. Radiant—glory (*dosa*), grandeur
- E. **Eternal**
 - 1. “The eternal God is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms” (Dt 33:27)
 - 2. Beyond *chronos*, there is *kairos*
- F. **Ruler**
 - 1. Ultimate Authority, exercising providential care—B. Ramm: “veracious authority”
 - 2. Rich young ruler rightly came to Jesus, wrongly turned away from Father Ruler

III. FATHERLY ROLE

- A. Progenitor: patrimony acknowledged: having made us He never denies His patrimony—covenants
- B. Lawgiver: tenacious, “tough love,” disciplining us
- C. Liberator: persistent commitment to our freedom, challenging us to mature, achieve
- D. Protector: constant commitment to our welfare—Harry Truman defends daughter Margaret