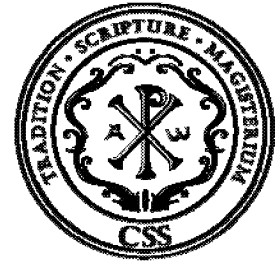


Lesson 6. . . Relating to Our Heavenly Father
The Gospel of Matthew

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Notes From the Podium

By Fr. Matthew Kauth

These notes are intended to augment your own reading and study of the lesson. Please use as an aid to help document the main message of the lecture.

Matthew 6:1-34

- I. The Beatitudes (discussed in Lesson 5)
 - A. Direction and purpose
 - B. Describes a walk that is filled with difficulty, suffering and sacrifice
 - C. But it is not all arduous.
 - 1. Catholicism = “Now and Later”
 - a. We begin the walk “now” and “later” we have consummate union with the Father.
 - b. We have that consummate union “now” as well
 - c. The blessed, the *makarioi*, are heading to beatitude and they participate in beatitude now.
 - 2. There is someone who walks, unseen, among the blessed – the Father.
- II. “Beware of practicing your piety before men in order to be seen...”
 - A. Your light will shine before men in and of itself.
 - B. Acts of Christian piety and Prayer
 - 1. These are not acts of make-believe, we are not on stage; they are real.
 - 2. Works of righteousness and piety done for the purpose of being seen will not only cause the loss of reward from the Father, but also the loss of the joy of doing them.
 - 3. Prayer too is not make-believe, but an actual discourse with someone who is really there and who really responds.
 - 4. It is the belief that makes us, ultimately
 - C. “When you give alms, sound no trumpet before you...”
 - 1. Remember the purpose of the act; we do it because we love our Father.
 - 2. The purpose then is not for the eyes of others but for the eyes of the Father.
- III. What catches our Father’s eye?
 - A. The widow’s mite (Luke 21:1-4)
 - B. The joy of the works of mercy are there when you do the works that are hidden and only for the Father to see.
 - 1. Joy increases between you and the Father in an intimate relationship of love.
 - 2. This is the whole point of the works, to increase with Him your labors of love.
 - C. We receive Grace from the Father
 - 1. Truly the blessings our Lord bestows on us are worthy of sharing.
 - 2. But some are just for you, and should stay between you and your Father.
 - a. St. Therese of Liseaux spoke of the miracle from Our Lady and she said that every time she relayed the miracle it became less and less real.
 - b. There is a little space, a room, a sanctuary, a church, a tabernacle inside you.
 - i. Inside the commerce of love between you and the Father takes place.
 - ii. Only the fruits should be brought out and spent.
 - iii. The intimate relations between you and Our Lord are only for you and for Him.
 - 3. Our Lord does not want us to blow the trumpet when we offer acts of love.

- a. He wants it to be for Him, something intimate and private.
 - b. When he puts Graces in us, he wants it to be private, intimate moments of love.
 - 4. Everyone receives the fruits of that love but not everyone is privy to the relationship.
- IV. “When you pray...”
 - A. “...must not be like the hypocrites...”
 - 1. They try to cajole our Lord with beautiful phrases as though our Lord needs to be convinced of something.
 - 2. Or they pray in order to be seen by others. Who are they talking to?
 - B. Our Lord does not need convincing, He is already our advocate.
 - C. Public Prayer
 - 1. Intimate relations between you and God are very difficult to articulate and you don’t bring them out for everyone to see.
 - 2. For this reason the prayer of the Church is fundamentally ritual.
 - a. Ritual is something that we do not create of form, but something that forms us.
 - b. It is something that we enter into; we don’t bring it out of our own hearts.
 - D. Private Prayer
 - 1. It is private.
 - 2. The Father looks in secret where you speak to Him, where you whisper to Him as in the Song of Songs: “Lo my beloved knocks at the door. Enter and come in my beloved.”
- V. The Divine Indwelling
 - A. Our heart is the place where our Lord desires to live.
 - B. So this “room” in the interiority of yourself, is locked to all but your Father in heaven and your Mother, the Church.
 - C. This “room” is where you go to speak to your Father.
- VI. *Sursum Corda* – Lift up your hearts!
 - A. When you pray you are on procession.
 - B. You go to stand before the face of God.
 - C. You give your heart to Him who is indwelling and in the secret recesses, the heat of love intensifies.
 - 1. St. Therese describes this as “like an oven”:
 - a. If you open the door, the heat is constantly escaping.
 - b. Don’t open your mouth to speak to the world.
 - c. Don’t open the tabernacle for everyone to see.
 - d. Keep it veiled and the heat stays in.
 - 2. “...but when you pray go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret.”
- VII. People often say, “I am very spiritual...”
 - A. It is not enough to be “spiritual”.
 - 1. If you have a soul, you can’t help but be spiritual.
 - 2. Do you do anything with that spirit?
 - 3. Satan is a spirit, so he is also “spiritual”.
 - B. To be human is to be spiritual by nature.
 - 1. But do you have an interior life?
 - 2. Are you building anything in there?
 - C. Is Our Lord the only one with the key to your interior life?
 - 1. Has that sanctuary been trampled by others?
 - 2. Is there still a sanctuary there at all?
 - D. Close the door, “and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.”
- VIII. Your Father knows what you need before you ask Him.

- A. Elijah on Mt. Carmel – knows that many words are not needed, but only a contrite and humble heart. One that knows his Father.
 - B. Mt. Carmel is to become the Mountain of Prayer.
- IX. “Our Father...”
- A. A Divinely-given prayer
 - 1. God is Father, Who eternally generates the Son.
 - 2. He is Father and we are to become sons in the Son. So we can say “Our Father”...
 - a. By the walk of the Beatitudes
 - b. By the cross
 - 3. What Joy!
 - a. He who controls everything, He is Father and you are child.
 - b. Everything is yours. All the world a playground.
 - c. Everything is yours and you are His.
 - B. “..Who art in heaven...” – Wherever He is and wherever you are in Him, that is heaven.
 - C. “Hallowed be Thy name.”
 - 1. The holiness of God, the consuming fire. Even the angels veil their eyes.
 - 2. To be a son or daughter of Him who is holy, we must transform the interiority of our heart, so
 - a. That holiness must take place in us.
 - b. Like the bush that burns but is not consumed.
 - D. “Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done”
 - 1. Understand what you are asking.
 - a. You want His kingdom to really come.
 - b. You want to follow the rule of the King of kings and be His subject.
 - c. That you give Him your will.
 - 2. You are saying, “Your kingdom come, you rule me, rule this unruly subject, rule, right here on earth as you do in heaven.”
 - E. “Give us this day our daily bread”
 - 1. *Epiouision* – translated as “daily”; literally means super-substantial, above and beyond.
 - 2. Many Fathers of the Church have seen in that phrase the Most Blessed Eucharist – the Bread come down from heaven.
 - a. We ask the Father to send us the Son, the very life of Christ, Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity.
 - b. A daily hunger for the super-substantial Bread should be created in us, such that even a single day without Holy Communion is like a day in the desert.
 - F. “Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors”
 - 1. A dangerous thing to say.
 - 2. The standard by which you will be judged is the standard by which you judge others.
 - 3. The mercy that you afford will be the mercy that is measured out to you.
 - G. “And lead us not into temptation”
 - 1. “I don’t even want the trial”.
 - 2. “I do not have so much pride as to suspect I would fare well if you allow me to fall into the depths of temptation.
 - 3. “I am admitting my humility, my littleness. I am too little to fight.”
 - 4. “I am just a child.
 - H. “But deliver us from the evil one.”
 - 1. YOU deliver us; you’re the only one who can.
 - 2. The “evil one” is Satan.
 - 3. Christ entered into temptation and won. Would we?
 - 4. We fall very quickly in the absence of Grace.

- X. “When you fast...”
- A. More prescriptions for the road.
 - B. Do not look dismal.
 - 1. To be sad is not the point.
 - a. Sadness is not a Christian virtue.
 - b. The normal state of Christians is to be joyful.
 - 2. How many converts will you win if you look sad and forlorn?
 - C. The hypocrites do and they have received their reward.
 - 1. They wished to be seen by men.
 - 2. Their reward is stealing the glory of the Father, the adulation of men.
 - D. “Anoint your head and wash your face.’
 - 1. So that you’re fasting is not seen by men but by the Father in secret.
 - 2. He will reward you in secret.
 - E. Why look joyful and be joyful?
 - 1. You are preparing for a banquet.
 - 2. You are going to the Bridegroom’s banquet.
 - 3. You should be excited.
- XI. “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth...”
- A. Referring to that inner room
 - 1. Like a squirrel, you should store up in that room every Grace that you might feed on it in time of famine.
 - 2. That indwelling is the beginning of heaven, the “Now and Later”
 - B. So when you die and you arrive at the shores of heaven and see the place that God has prepared for you, it is going to feel like home.
 - 1. It will all be familiar to you, this act of suffering, this act of sacrifice, etc...
 - 2. You never saw it but you will remember it.
 - C. “Where eye has not seen and ear has not heard...” that is where you lay up your treasure.
- XII. “The eye is the lamp of the soul...”
- A. You need a light to discern what is to be taken into the sanctuary.
 - B. No one lives in there but the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
- XIII. “You cannot serve two masters.”
- A. Not “should not” but “cannot”
 - B. You will serve and worship whether you like it or not, the question is what or who will you serve and worship.
 - C. To serve men of things is to serve death.
- XIV. “Do not be anxious about your life...”
- A. How can you have anxiety when you know that the Father who created everything is your Father?
 - B. He knows what you need, so don’t worry about it.
 - C. “Seek first the kingdom and His righteousness...”
 - D. *Providentia dei nos* – The providence of God will provide for us.