

## Why I Am Catholic ...

**God as Father** - and the call of all men who are fathers to imitate God's fatherly love, care, and protection.

Other Christians rarely emphasize the fatherhood of God. Some actually diminish it due to modern societal problems where the importance of fathers has been diminished. Before Christ, rarely was God called: "Father."

The Book of Deuteronomy asks: "Is he not your father who created you?" (Deut 32:6) After observing: "Yet basely has he been treated by his degenerate children." (vs. 5) God speaks to King David through the prophet Nathan: "I will be a father to him, and he shall be a son to me." (II Sam 7:14, I Chr 17:13) David "shall cry to me, 'You are my father, my God. . .'" (Ps 89:27) The just man "boasts that God is his Father." (Wis 2:16) "You, Lord, are our father, our redeemer. . ." (Is 63:16) "For I am a father to Israel." (Jer 31:9) "Have we not all the one Father? Has not the one God created us?" (Mal 2:10) The way Jesus calls God "Father" alarms the Pharisees and Jewish leaders. For us, it is comforting and reminds us of God's approachability. "I am going to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God." (Jn 20:17) Christ shows us how relational God is. That being in relationship is part of God's being, revealed by the Holy Trinity. The Sign of the Cross begins with: "In the name of the Father. . ." The Nicene Creed begins: "I Believe In God The Father Almighty, Creator Of Heaven And Earth." The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* explains: "Many religions invoke God as 'Father'. The deity is often considered the 'father of gods and of men'. In Israel, God is called 'Father' inasmuch as he is Creator of the world. Even more, God is Father because of the covenant and the gift of the law to Israel, 'his first-born son'. God is also called the Father of the king of Israel. Most especially he is 'the Father of the poor', of the orphaned and the widowed, who are under his loving protection. (238) "By calling God 'Father', the language of faith indicates two main things: that God is the first origin of everything and transcendent authority; and that he is at the same time goodness and loving care for all his children. God's parental tenderness can also be expressed by the image of motherhood, which emphasizes God's immanence, the intimacy between Creator and creature. "The language of faith thus draws on the human experience of parents, who are in a way the first representatives of God for man. But this experience also tells us that human parents are fallible and can disfigure the face of fatherhood and motherhood. We ought therefore to recall that God transcends the human distinction between the sexes. He is neither man nor woman: he is God. He also transcends human fatherhood and motherhood, although he is their origin and standard: no one is father as God is Father. (239) "Jesus revealed that God is Father in an unheard-of sense: he is Father not only in being Creator; he is eternally Father in relation to his only Son, who is eternally Son only in relation to his Father: 'No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and any one to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.'" (Mt 11:27) (240)

Sadly, some want to remove the word "Father" from our spiritual language, from our documents, because so many have had a negative experience and have a negative image. They want to stop praying the "Our Father" or rewrite the prayer. We do not need to change our prayers, we need to change what is happening in our homes. "By 1994, 24 million American children were living without their biological fathers." (*Horn, "You've Come a Long Way, Daddy"*) "In 1960, only about 7 million children lived in homes without their fathers—a relatively small percentage of the U.S. population. **Today, nearly half of all kids grow up without their father at home.**" (*Oklahoma Family Policy Council*) "The divine fatherhood is the source of human fatherhood; this is the foundation of the honor owed to parents." (*Catechism*, 2214) "The father's role is central in family life. To belittle the father's specific task is to destroy the children's identity as future spouses and parents. . . The father's task, which is often obscured, is of great importance in the formation of the children's personality and in the decisive choices regarding their future. . . Parents have the task of nourishing the life that God has entrusted to them." (*"Children: Springtime of the Family and Society"*)